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The Hidden Chorus

Echoes of Genre in Tragic Lyric

L. A. Swift



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L. A. SWIFT

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For my parents

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Preface

THIS book began life as a doctoral thesis funded by an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant which I held as a student at Magdalen College, Oxford. The process of converting the thesis into a book was done while I was a Junior Research Fellow at Trinity College, Oxford, and I am tremendously grateful to Trinity for the support which it provided during this period.

Two sections of the book are based on articles which I have published elsewhere. Parts of Chapter 6 appear in my article 'Mixed Choruses and Marriage Songs: A New Interpretation of the Third Stasimon of *Hippolytos*', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 126 (2006) 125–40, and parts of Chapter 5 appear in my article 'How to Make a Goddess Angry: Making Sense of the Demeter Ode in Euripides' *Helen*', *Classical Philology* 104.4 (2009). I would like to thank both journals for their permission to reprint this material.

A far more personal debt is owed to those individuals who have helped shape my work. For the initial stages, my doctoral supervisor, Armand D'Angour, and my former tutor, Oliver Taplin, provided me with a great deal of support, and their advice has always been much appreciated. I am profoundly grateful to my two examiners, Chris Carey and Chris Pelling, who were kind enough to provide a great deal of feedback on the thesis. Without their comments the book would be much the poorer. I am also extremely grateful to Gregory Hutchinson, my adviser to the Press, who read the manuscript with a keen eye for detail and whose suggestions have been most helpful and thought-provoking. I would also like to thank Patrick Finglass for his comments on early drafts of several sections, and David Wallace for his help with genre-theory and methodology.

Finally, special thanks are due to Bill Allan, not only for his detailed comments on the entire book, but also for his constant encouragement and support in both academic and non-academic ways.

L.A.S.

Oxford, March 2009

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Abbreviations, Texts used, and Other Conventions

ARV ²	J. Beazley, <i>Attic Red-Figure Vase Painters</i> (2nd edn., Oxford, 1963)
CAF	T. Koch, ed., <i>Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta</i> (Leipzig, 1880–8)
CEG	P. A. Hansen, ed., <i>Carmina Epigraphica Graeca</i> (Berlin, 1983–9)
FGrHist	F. Jacoby, ed., <i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> (Berlin and Leipzig, 1923–58).
IG ³	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> (3rd edn., Berlin, 1981–94)
K–A	R. Kassel and C. Austin, eds., <i>Poetae Comici Graeci</i> (Berlin and New York, 1983–)
LfgrE	B. Snell and H. Erbse, eds., <i>Lexicon des frühgriechischen Epos</i> (Göttingen, 1955–)
LIMC	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i> (Zurich, 1981–97)
LSJ	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. Stuart Jones, <i>A Greek–English Lexicon</i> (9th edn., Oxford, 1940)
M–W	R. Merkelbach and M. L. West, eds., <i>Fragmenta Hesiodica</i> (Oxford, 1967)
PMG	D. Page, ed., <i>Poetae Melici Graeci</i> (Oxford, 1962)
PMGF	M. Davies, ed., <i>Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> (Oxford, 1991)
R	I. Rutherford, <i>Pindar's Paeans: A Reading of the Fragments with a Survey of the Genre</i> (Oxford, 2001)
RE	A. Pauly and G. Wissowa, <i>Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> (Stuttgart and Munich, 1894–)
S–M	B. Snell and H. Maehler, eds., <i>Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis</i> (Leipzig, 1987–9)
TrGF	B. Snell, R. Kannicht, and S. L. Radt, eds., <i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> (Göttingen 1971–2004)
V	E.-M. Voigt, ed., <i>Sappho et Alcaeus</i> (Amsterdam, 1971)
W	M. L. West, ed., <i>Iambi et Elegi Graeci</i> (2nd edn., Oxford, 1989–92)

Journal abbreviations are as in *L'Année Philologique*.

For the sake of simplicity, when citing tragedy I use the most recent OCTs unless otherwise stated: for Aeschylus, the edition of D. L. Page; for Sophocles, the edition of H. Lloyd-Jones and N. G. Wilson; for Euripides, the edition of J. Diggle.

All translations are mine.

Note on orthography and terminology

When referring to lyric genres, I use the transliterated form of the Greek word in italics (e.g. *paian* not paean; *hymenaios* not hymenaeus). I also use the English adjective that derives from these nouns (e.g. paeanic, hymenaeal), for which the Anglicized spelling is used. However, when I am talking about how a particular Greek word is used, without prejudice to whether it is in fact a reliable genre-name, I give the Greek word untransliterated (e.g. ‘the Greeks use the word *παιάν* with a range of connotations’).

I use the uncapitalized form ‘chorus’ when referring to the chorus as an institution, or the tragic chorus in general, and the capitalized form ‘Chorus’ when referring to a particular chorus in a play. Thus ‘the tragic chorus has a range of functions’, but ‘the Chorus of *Medea* show their loyalty to the protagonist’.

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Introduction

IN recent years, scholars of Greek tragedy have become increasingly aware that our reading of the plays is enhanced when we view them in relation to the society that produced them. This has proved an important development, and the analysis of tragedy's relationship to Athenian politics, ideology, and religious practice has enriched our interpretation in many ways. Yet this contextually driven approach has, to date, told only a partial story. We must read tragedy not only as drama, but also as choral song.

For the Greeks, music was fundamental to civic education, and participating in or watching choral performance played a central role in musical and cultural life. Our fullest account of the importance of choral song is found in Plato's *Laws*. As the dialogue turns to educational theory, the Athenian expounds a new way of ensuring good moral training: a carefully regulated set of choruses, designed to instil correct attitudes in the citizens from an early age, and to maintain these values throughout their lives (2.664b–667a). What is of interest here is not the system that Plato suggests, but the parameters within which he seems to be working. For, while the three choruses he suggests for his ideal state may be contentious philosophy that requires justification, the importance of choral training *per se* is taken entirely for granted in the text. The chorus is regarded as the natural medium to educate citizens, and to pass on the values of the community. Indeed, the definition of an uneducated man the Athenian gives is someone who is ἀχόρευτος ('chorus-less'), and his interlocutor, Cleinias, readily agrees (2.654a).

In most Greek *poleis*, choruses performed at a wide range of occasions, from the private to the public, and from the small-scale

to the lavish. Choral performance was used to mark the most significant moments in the life of individuals and the community, from weddings and funerals, to state religious celebrations. Training in choral dance often began in childhood, and Plato envisages choral performance as part of a citizen's life at every stage. In many cities, women also received training in choral performance; this demonstrates the degree to which the chorus pervaded society and the variety of uses to which it could be put. Dancing in a chorus, or simply watching one perform, represented an immersion into the values of the community, and a participation in its ritual, political, and religious life.

It is surprising, therefore, that the relationship between these ritual choruses and the choruses of drama has not been systematically examined. For the tragic chorus is still often regarded as an institution in its own right, and one which requires an explanation to make sense of it, whether this is as the 'ideal spectator', 'voice of the *polis*', or 'marginalized other'. Yet to a Greek watching a play, the chorus is not just a convention of drama, it is something deeply familiar to him from his daily life. It would be wrong to describe lyric poetry simply in terms of tragedy's inheritance, for it is also part of the wider contemporary musical culture in which tragedy is rooted. Hence the poetic types being performed contemporaneously with tragedy are critical to understanding the broader cultural discourse in which it is rooted, and they inform the world-views of both the poet and his audience. It is generally acknowledged that tragedy can make use of material derived from other types of lyric, and there has been useful work done on particular choral odes or plays. However, there has not been any thorough attempt to explore the range of ways in which the tragedians deploy references to lyric genres, or to compare the way the same genre is evoked across different plays: it is this gap that this book seeks to fill.

This book will explore the ways in which tragedy interacts with other choral genres, and argue that this generic interaction is more wide-ranging and sophisticated than has been recognized. On analysis, the relationship between tragic and non-tragic lyric is not simply a matter of linguistic, metrical, or thematic echoes. Rather, when tragedy alludes to lyric genres, it evokes a whole set of cultural and normative assumptions involved in them, and the tragedians use

this to enhance the themes, motifs, and imagery of their work. Using genre as a filter, then, can be a powerful interpretative tool, and the readings that emerge from it are rich ones. However, the implications of this approach go beyond textual close-reading. Analysing tragedy's interaction with other poetic forms gives us new insight into tragedy's self-conception as a choral genre and its status in Athenian society.

One reason that the interface between lyric and tragedy has been under-studied is the fragmentary nature of lyric poetry, and the difficulties involved in defining lyric genres. Thus while references to Homeric epic in tragedy have long been easy to spot, recognizing something as an allusion to a lyric genre has proved a much harder task. The extant corpus of Greek lyric has increased dramatically over the last hundred years, and new papyrological discoveries continue to change our understanding of it. However, after a new text is published, there is often a delay before it receives literary and cultural interpretation: until the text is secure, it is hard to say anything further about it. Another problem has been that genre studies frequently become ensnared in problems of definition, which has made it difficult to come to any concrete conclusions. In order to explore tragedy's interaction with lyric, it is therefore necessary to come up with a framework for understanding lyric genres. For this reason, Chapter 1 of this book discusses the difficulties involved in defining genres, and tries to negotiate a route through them. As we shall see, many of the problems that surround lyric genres result from an excessively rigid approach to the categorization of genres: a better methodology is one built around core features and reliable indicators; with such a methodology, we need not regard exceptions or borderline cases as precluding us from reaching a definition. This chapter also sets out my approach for dealing with tragedy's interaction with lyric; it explores the ways in which tragedy and lyric interact, and why we can identify generic interaction less easily for some genres than for others (in particular *dithyrambos*).

As well as exploring conceptual problems with lyric genres, we need to examine how lyric poetry was performed and circulated in fifth-century Athens. Chapter 2 looks at lyric in an Athenian context, and investigates the extent to which lyric genres were part of contemporary performance culture, and the extent to which they

were regarded as elite material. This chapter also explores broader issues surrounding elite culture in democratic Athens, and argues for a continuity in cultural aspirations across the socio-economic spectrum. Moreover, the tragedians take pains to present lyric material in an accessible way, which suggests that the technique is designed to be meaningful to a mass audience.

Having established this methodological groundwork, I spend the bulk of the book analysing the ways in which genres are used in tragedy, with the focus on five genres: *paian*, *epinikion*, *partheneia*, *hymenaios*, and *thrēnos*. Each chapter begins with an exploration of the genre as it was understood in the archaic and classical period, and attempts to identify core features which the tragedians could draw on to evoke the particular genre. The second part of each chapter deals with lyric allusions in tragedy, and begins with a survey of how the genre in question can be used, before moving on to case-studies of plays in which the genre is deployed to particularly interesting effect. The plays selected for these case-studies are those which demonstrate the richest use of generic interaction. Here, lyric material is used to develop important themes; understanding these allusions can enhance our reading of the plays, as well as enriching our understanding of the links between poetic forms. The main aim of these chapters is to illuminate some of the ways in which tragedy engages with lyric motifs, rather than to provide an exhaustive study of how these allusions work in tragedy as a whole. However, in order to provide a more complete picture of how generic interaction works, the book contains an Appendix, which details all the clusters of lyric allusion (or related imagery) that I have found in my reading of tragedy.

Scholars have regularly noted allusions to lyric genres in tragedy, and have been able to identify particular choral odes as being paeanic, hymenaeal, or epinician in flavour. However, if we stop our analysis there, we fail to notice the broader importance that this language can possess. For, as we shall see, lyric allusions need not be an isolated decorative feature, but can be part of a systematic poetic structure running through the plays. Evoking a genre is not simply a matter of a literary allusion to an elite text: rather it evokes a set of cultural expectations and ideals, which the audience can then apply to the world of the play. Moreover, the very fact that tragedy regularly refers

to lyric genres gives us insight into its own self-positioning as a poetic genre, and the deep-rooted connections between tragic and ritual lyric performance. Hence, by taking seriously tragedy's use of lyric genres, we stand to gain not only an enriched interpretation of individual plays and passages, but a better understanding of tragedy's role within its community and its nature as a choral genre.

Understanding Lyric Genres

Studying Greek lyric genres can feel like the intellectual equivalent of walking over quicksand. At first sight, the plethora of terminology in ancient discussions of genres appears reassuring and authoritative. But upon examination, few of these assertions are built on firm foundations and any attempt to define genres can lead all too easily to becoming embroiled in the inconsistencies in the texts. There are two reasons why Greek genres have been so difficult to handle: firstly, the small size of the corpus of extant lyric poetry makes it hard to take an empirical approach; secondly, ancient writings on genre theory are unreliable and often at odds with the poetry that we do possess, which means that our basis for creating theoretical frameworks is insecure. Thus, in attempting to analyse tragedy's engagement with other genres, we must first tackle two major methodological hurdles: how are we to define lyric genres, and how are we to think about the way that tragedy engages with lyric material? This chapter will begin by setting out my methodology for understanding lyric genres, and my approach to selecting genres for this book. The final part of the chapter will set out a framework for understanding the interaction between lyric poetry and tragedy.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF DEFINING LYRIC GENRES?

Before we begin examining genres, we must ask ourselves what it is we gain from attempting to define and classify them. Musical genres

are clearly not the same kind of thing as (say) species of animals: there is no naturally defined objective truth that can be encapsulated by a classificatory system.¹ On the other hand, we want to say that classifying genres tells us something about actual differences in music, rather than simply being a convenient way to divide up what was in fact a continuous whole. Even if the way we separate out particular genres is primarily the work of modern theorists, the aim of doing so is to point at (if not precisely define) something in the conceptual world of an ancient Greek.² Greek genres are not purely literary artefacts, but are, in origin, songs produced for ritual purposes in a particular society; they therefore derive their purpose from the occasion for which they are composed.³ Thus by attempting to understand the features that characterize individual genres, we stand to gain insight into the occasions that marked significant moments in the ritual life of a Greek *polis* and the private lives of its citizens.

Any classification scheme we come up with, then, should fulfil two criteria. Firstly, it should be descriptive: that is, it should pick out genuine structure from among the mass of Greek poems. We should find that poems fit fairly naturally into the classifications we define, and the classification of a poem into a particular genre should not depend too much on precise boundaries between genres (though we may find occasional exceptions). Secondly, our scheme should be productive. If we know that a poem belongs to a particular genre, this should tell us other interesting things about the poem and enrich our understanding of it.⁴

¹ There are, of course, objective *differences* between musical forms (for example, monody vs. choral lyric). However, the existence of these differences and the forms which they take are a matter of human convention rather than reflecting a naturally defined truth about the world.

² Cf. Barchiesi (2002) 154: 'genres are not natural objects but theory-related constructs, yet . . . some degree of vestigial existentialism is unavoidable in all critical positions about genre'.

³ For the importance of performance in defining and understanding Greek genres, cf. Dover (1964); Fowler (1987); Gentili (1988); Nagy (1990) 360; Käppel (1992) 34–6; Dougherty (1994) 43–4; Ford (2002) 8–13; Ford (2003); Carey (2009).

⁴ Cf. Conte (1994) 106–7.

PROBLEMS WITH LYRIC GENRES: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Unfortunately for our efforts to understand lyric genres, ancient attempts at genre theory are unhelpful. Classical writers use genre-names to refer to types of song, which suggests that genre-terms were in common use and generally recognized. However, these references are usually made in passing, and rarely involve extensive accounts of what they mean: with the exception of some short passages in Plato and Aristotle, we have no evidence of interest by fifth- or fourth-century Greeks in constructing theoretical frameworks for types of poetry.⁵ The existence of a generic system indicates that classical Greeks conceptualized distinctions in poetic types, but we find little evidence that Greeks of this period were interested in analysing why songs should be allocated to one category rather than another, or in defining the boundaries of these categories. When we turn to Hellenistic writers, on the other hand, we find extensive attempts to classify and categorize types of poetry, and genres are sometimes used as a means to do this.⁶ However, when we come to analyse these accounts of lyric genres, it becomes clear that their relationship to the groupings a fifth-century Greek would have used to describe lyric poetry is at best dubious.

The fullest ancient account of genres is that of Proclus' *Chrestomathia*, and we can use his account as a case study of the problems that emerge when we use ancient writers as sources. Proclus' work, preserved in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius, probably dates from the second century AD, though it is influenced by earlier Hellenistic works on musical genres.⁷ Proclus begins by subdividing lyric

⁵ Rosenmeyer (1985) discusses the Plato and Aristotle passages and notes the general lack of interest in genre-theory, while Ford (2002) 258–61 discusses the political motivations behind Plato's treatment of genres. See Nightingale (1995) on Plato's interest in poetic genres.

⁶ See Sluiter (2000) on the uses that later writers made of classical and archaic genres.

⁷ Proclus is often thought to be influenced by the *περὶ τῶν λυρικῶν ποιητῶν* of Didymus, but Didymus himself would have had earlier writers on whom to draw: see Rutherford (1995b) 356 n. 8 for the author and his sources, and Harding (2005) for a discussion of Didymus.

into three categories: religious (*εἰς θεούς*), secular (*εἰς ἀνθρώπους*), and poems composed for particular circumstances (*εἰς τὰς προσπιπτούσας περιστάσεις*), though he notes that some types of poems have both religious and secular purposes (Phot. *Bibl.* 239.319b32–320a8). Within each of these categories, Proclus lists a number of song-types. However, the types listed do not have equal status, and their independent identities can be problematic.

For example, if we take the section on religious genres (239.320a9–20), we are given a list of eight song-types: *hymnos*, *prosodion*, *paian*, *dithyrambos*, *nomos*, *adōnis*, *iobacchos*, and *hyporchēma*. The natural interpretation of this classificatory system would be that all these are examples of the same class and with a similar status. However, this is not the case. Shortly afterwards, Proclus notes that *hymnos* is in fact used rather more broadly, to denote all types of religious song, and suggests that the other song-types listed would be better understood as subcategories of *hymnos*. Still later he refers to something he calls the *κυρίως ὕμνος* ('*hymnos* strictly speaking'), which he explains as a song sung standing still, in contrast to the processional *prosodion*. It is unclear from this discussion whether Proclus is trying to suggest *hymnos* is in fact an independent genre but that the word is also used more widely, or whether he takes *hymnos* to be a catch-all term for religious song.

Proclus' analysis of problematic genres, then, is confusing. Moreover, his definition of individual genres is also open to question. For example, all we are told about the *prosodion* is that it is sung during the procession to the temple, and accompanied by the *aulos*. We are given no other characteristic features, either about the song itself or its performance context. We can tell that *prosodia* are not easy to define, since Proclus comments that they are sometimes mistaken for *paianes* (239.320a24–5), yet it is unclear whether Proclus envisages any distinction between *prosodion* and *paian* other than the processional nature of the former.

Similarly, we are never certain to what extent Proclus is anachronistic. In the case of the *paian*, he explicitly notes a diachronic change: the *paian* used to be composed just for Apollo and Artemis, and its purpose was to cure disease, whereas in his day *paianes* were composed for all the gods (239.320a20–5). However, when he makes other statements about lyric genres (for example, his comment that

dithyramboi involve frenzied dancing, 239.320b12–16), it is unclear whether he is referring to the songs as they existed in his day or to an older period, and whether he has evidence for the continuity of a tradition.

As soon as we start to look critically at ancient writing on genre, then, it becomes apparent that adopting their system of classification is problematic. The validity of the grammarians' classifications was challenged by scholars in the mid-twentieth century, most notably Harvey in a seminal article.⁸ Harvey examines the evidence we have for understanding lyric genres, and points out the failings in Alexandrian classifications. Such scholarship is necessarily negative; it aims to clear away misconceptions caused by taking unreliable sources too literally, rather than seeking to impose a new scheme of classification in its place.⁹ Sweeping away the tendency to make assumptions based on Hellenistic sources was of enormous importance to genre-studies, but left scholars without a positive framework for trying to think about genre.

By the end of the twentieth century, however, classical scholarship began to place more weight on cultural and performance contexts as a route to interpreting ancient texts. The impact of this has been felt in the study both of tragedy and of lyric poetry. In the case of tragedy, recent scholarship has emphasized the social and cultural contexts in which tragedy is rooted: the civic and ritual aspects of the Dionysia, the emphasis in plays on contemporary themes, values, and debates.¹⁰ For lyric genres, an increased emphasis on performance contexts and social functions has led to more constructive studies of particular genres, which seek to understand them in terms of the roles they play in ritual and society, rather than from literary templates. In particular, Claude Calame's study of female choruses and Lutz Käppel and Ian Rutherford's books on *paianes* demonstrate that this approach can lead to a more fruitful understanding of how

⁸ Harvey (1955).

⁹ Cf. Harvey (1955) 175: 'The result of this discussion is, I am aware, depressingly negative'.

¹⁰ Significant contributions in this area include Goldhill (1986); Winkler and Zeitlin (1990); Seaford (1994). For a counter to this trend in scholarship, see Griffin (1998), and also the responses by Seaford (2000) and Goldhill (2000). For a recent and less Atheno-centric perspective see Rhodes (2003); Carter (2007).

lyric genres work.¹¹ Moreover, theoretical approaches to genre have also advanced, giving us a more sophisticated arsenal with which to approach the question.¹² It remains, therefore, to piece together both sides of the puzzle, for we are now in a position to create a constructive picture of how lyric genres worked in their communities.

PLATONIC FORMS OR WITTGENSTEINIAN FAMILIES: HOW TO APPROACH LYRIC GENRES

Scholars working on genre have traditionally treated genres as a tool for categorization: a tendency which, as we have seen, dates back to Hellenistic grammarians. To assign poems to categories, critics look for defining characteristics which allow them to decide that a poem belongs to one genre rather than another.¹³ Yet the process of isolating these characteristics is fraught with difficulty. Even with a genre where we have a wealth of surviving examples and a great deal of knowledge about the surrounding contexts, it is no simple matter to come up with a description based on common features which accurately and adequately encapsulates the genre.

Take, for example, tragedy.¹⁴ We could create a list of features about tragedies which we believe to be formally true, such as 'performed at the Dionysia', 'contains a chorus', 'no more than three actors'. However, these statements do not adequately explain what tragedy is. If we discovered that *Medea* had been originally performed at a different festival, it would affect our understanding of the performance

¹¹ Calame (1977); Käppel (1992); Rutherford (2001a).

¹² Much of this work has been on Latin genres: cf. Conte (1994); Hinds (1998); Barchiesi (2002). For more general approaches see also Todorov (1990) 13–26; Duff (2000). For Greek-focused work, cf. e.g. Rossi (1971); Gentili (1988); Depew and Obbink (2000); Ford (2002).

¹³ e.g. Cairns (1972) 6: 'Every genre can be thought of as having a set of primary or logically necessary elements which in combination distinguish that genre from every other genre.'

¹⁴ See Mastronarde (1999–2000); Most (2000); Allan (2008) 66–72 on the difficulties of defining tragedy as a genre.

contexts of fifth-century theatre, but would not make us stop classifying the play as a tragedy. If we were to discover a play where it was completely clear that there were four speaking actors, it might change our understanding of theatrical logistics, funding, and innovations, but it would not cause us to question that we were right to allocate our surviving tragedies to a single genre. On the other hand, statements which seem to aim more at some concept of an 'essence' to the genre such as 'about the fall of a great individual', 'a movement from success to suffering' invariably turn out to be contentious because of the existence of counter-examples.¹⁵

In talking about genres, then, a particular trap we must avoid is the temptation to seek watertight definitions, and to reject a theory if we can find confused, conflicting, or borderline cases.¹⁶ Poetic genres should not be conceptualized as though they were Platonic Forms—perfect templates against which each instantiation must be measured. Any attempt to define a lyric genre precisely is doomed to failure: quite simply, poetic and musical types do not bear precise definition. The 'Platonic Forms' model tries to define genres purely in terms of essential characteristics, and does not make space for counter-examples and awkward cases. It does not allow adequately for the fact that certain aspects of genres are purely conventional, hence their presence or absence may not affect a poem's claim to belong to a particular genre. However, it does not follow from this that any attempt to define a musical genre is doomed, or that genres do not bear any sort of definition.

To see how this might work in practice, let us take a modern example of a musical genre: the (modern Christian) hymn. If we were asked to define a hymn, we might pick out certain features as essential (for example, religious content), and others as extremely characteristic (significant words such as 'hosanna' or 'hallelujah'; performed by a group; accompanied by an organ). In practice, when we listen to a piece of music, a large number of details give

¹⁵ Fowler (1982) 38–40 discusses the difficulty of finding 'necessary elements' in literary genres. See Conte (1994) 105–28 on the need to balance empiricism and theoretical frameworks in Latin genre-theory.

¹⁶ Cf. Conte (1994) 117–18 on how innovation and blurred boundaries within genre-categories can be used for poetic effect.

us clues that lead us to classify it as a hymn: the type and tonality of the music, the lyrics, issues of performance. If asked, we could decide which of these features were the most important, and the absence of some of them would give us no trouble. For example, no one would claim that if a hymn were sung in a school hall to the accompaniment of a piano it would not still count as a hymn. Rules based on content might be harder to pin down. While we might insist on some kind of religious theme, any attempt to be more precise as to verbal formulations or specific motifs would exclude many songs traditionally recognized as hymns. Equally, Christian language and themes alone are not enough to make a song into a hymn: no one would classify Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* as a hymn despite its religious imagery, allusion to Bible stories, and its 'Hallelujah' refrain. Yet *Hallelujah* contains more Christian material than the popular hymn *Morning Has Broken* (a hymn whose lyrics are secular enough to have been repeatedly reworked as a pop song). The justification for classifying *Morning Has Broken* but not *Hallelujah* as a hymn is not exactly anything to do with content, but a rather more ambiguous feeling about authorial intention. The Christian language of *Hallelujah* is, we feel, used merely as imagery rather than being religious in intention. Conversely, *Morning Has Broken* appears to have the aim of praising God, despite the secular nature of the first two verses. Yet for defining a genre neatly this seems unsatisfactory, for it relies on our assumptions about original function and authorial intent rather than on objective criteria related to the content itself. We can therefore imagine a situation where one could have a genuine debate over whether something 'counted' as a hymn or not (for example, would *Hallelujah* count as a hymn if it were performed in a church service? Do the cover versions of *Morning Has Broken* on pop albums cease to count as hymns?). But these would be purely semantic disputes, and we would not allow them to make us doubt that there was some central concept of 'hymn', despite any exceptions and plays on the core rules we find in specific cases.

The analogy of the hymn brings out the futility of trying to find an exhaustive list of necessary features by which a genre can be defined. Rather, what it tells us is that our concept of a 'hymn' is developed from a range of indicators, which may or may not be present in an individual case. Some theorists working on English literary genres have

therefore suggested Wittgenstein's theory of family resemblances as a more productive way of analysing genres.¹⁷ Wittgenstein's model uses as an example the group 'games' to describe what unites a group as a single concept, concluding that 'these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all—but they are *related* to one another in many different ways' (§65). He argues that we are led to assume mistakenly that there must be a common feature which all members of the group share, because they share a common name. Instead, he posits that the relationship between all the members of the group consists of overlapping similarities and resemblances, analogous to members of a family. To express what it is that holds all these individual objects together as a unified group, he uses the analogy of a thread of twisted rope: 'the strength of the thread does not reside in the fact that some one fibre runs through its whole length, but in the overlapping of many fibres' (§67).¹⁸

This model is attractive compared to the 'Platonic Forms' model, as it acknowledges the impossibility of describing a template against which to measure examples of genres. However, it is still unsatisfactory, since it is not true that there is nothing common to all examples of a genre. Attempting to pick out necessary features may not give us enough to build a working understanding of a genre, but it is nevertheless possible to isolate a core purpose to each genre in the period under discussion. The unifying features of a lyric genre describe its function: we can define it by the role it is meant to perform. This is something particular to archaic and classical Greek lyric genres, as opposed to Latin or English literary genres.¹⁹ Greek genres are not simply literary devices, but are embedded in a ritual and performative context.²⁰ (This is in fact one of the reasons Hellenistic testimony on genres can be so unhelpful: the writers have access to the poems, but

¹⁷ Wittgenstein (1968) §§65–77. See Elliott (1962); Mandelbaum (1965); Hough (1966) 86; Fowler (1982) 41–3. Mandelbaum and Fowler both note the need to modify this model to allow generalizing about literature.

¹⁸ Cf. also Conte (1994) 108 on the relational aspect of genres.

¹⁹ For the differences between Roman and Greek genres, see Barchiesi (2000) 167–8.

²⁰ Indeed some scholars argue for a connection between the rise of literacy and the development of genre-categories based on formal features: see Gentili (1988) 3–23; Miller (1994) 3–8; Ford (2002) 8–13.

not to the social contexts into which the poetry is bound.) Thus, Greek genres are purposive in a way which Wittgensteinian 'games' are not: it is not simply an accident of human language and overlapping resemblance that certain things are systematically called by the same word.

The performative nature of Greek literature means that a viable genre-theory for Greek lyric will differ from one for Latin or English literature. A Greek lyric genre has a purpose to fulfil in the world outside the poem (for example, praising a god, celebrating a marriage) which purely literary genres do not. The key features by which we might begin to define our genres are the ones which connect most directly to this purpose: a genre which does not fulfil its function has little claim to being an example of that genre at all. For example, for *epinikion*, we might identify the key feature as being that it celebrates or commemorates an athletic victory. Nevertheless, we might note other features as being characteristic of *epinikia* (for example, an emphasis on the home town of the victor, moralizing *gnōmai*). These secondary or symptomatic features play a role which conforms more closely to Wittgenstein's family resemblances: in the absence of enough of them, we are likely to fail to recognize a poem as a family member.²¹

An analogy for the model I am proposing would be something like the clinical diagnosis of depression. To obtain a diagnosis as 'depressed', a patient must display at least five out of a list of nine symptoms, but at least one of them must be one of two core symptoms (depressed mood, diminished interest in usual activities), while the other four can be any of the wider list (for example, change in weight, suicidal thoughts).²² Change in weight is symptomatic of

²¹ This looks similar to the theory set out by Cairns (1972) 6. However, Cairns's concept of genres is considerably more binding, and his rules for genre-models more restrictive (see 31). In particular, he regards his 'primary elements' as sufficient to define a genre, whereas my 'core features' are too basic to be more than the groundwork for a definition—as I have argued above, genre definition will be at best loose. In addition, Cairns's concept of a genre is based on the contents of the poem, and as such leads to more rigid categorization with a strong system of subdivisions.

²² Information from the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (4th edn. 1994). I choose depression rather than a non-psychiatric illness, since defining when someone is clinically depressed versus simply 'depressed' in an idiomatic sense is an issue which requires careful use of

depression—sufficiently symptomatic that, in conjunction with other features, it is regarded as a reliable indicator. Nevertheless, a patient who does not display any change in weight might still obtain a diagnosis, providing that s/he shows enough other symptoms. Conversely, change in weight is a symptom of many conditions, and so using depression to explain a patient's weight-gain may be quite wrong. However, having a depressed mood and losing interest in normal activities are more than just two symptoms among many: they lie at the core of what the illness means. If a patient did not display either feature, it would not make any sense to claim that s/he had depression.

If we apply a similar model to a lyric genre, we might find one or two features which we can regard as essential: if none of those features were present, it would make no sense to claim that a poem belonged to that genre. Other features are best understood as symptomatic: useful indicators of the likelihood that a particular poem belongs to that genre. The more symptomatic features we find, the more confident we can be that we are dealing with an example of the genre, just as the more symptoms a patient displays, the more confident the doctor will be in his diagnosis. And a certain critical mass of symptomatic features is required to make a reasonable case. But the symptomatic features are no more than indicators: the absence of any one causes no problems, providing that the overall case shows a sufficient clustering of enough of them.²³

Where the analogy with depression breaks down, however, is that genres, unlike illnesses, are human constructs. An illness (arguably a mental illness and certainly a physical one) exists in the world independent of a human diagnosis or categorization of it: the difference between measles and HIV is molecular, not just conceptual. The symptoms of a disease are not really definitional of the disease itself—they are epiphenomenal rather than essential. Any particular

criteria. Conversely, it is not hard to obtain a diagnosis for (say) diabetes, where a single medical test can provide a definitive answer, and symptoms are only relevant in determining whether the test should be taken.

²³ A similar position is outlined by Conte (1994) 108: 'the single element must enter into constellation with others if it is to be transvalued and redefined—until it, too, is able to connote, by its presence, the presence of a whole genre'.

aspect of human ritual, on the other hand, is bound to contain elements which are simply conventional. A genre, then, is best understood as being a non-conventional core (the essential features), surrounded by other conventional elements (the 'symptomatic' features). The conventional elements are bound together by the shared consciousness of the community as to what is normal and appropriate to achieve that purpose. From the point of view of an original audience, the conventions are just as important as the core in forming everyday concepts of what a genre means. As scholars, we might agree that a good definition of the core meaning of the *paian* is that 'the primary associations of paeanic song-dance performance are with the safety of the *polis*, with healing, and with controlled celebration'.²⁴ But if we could ask a fifth-century Greek how he recognized that a particular song was a *paian*, we might well expect his answer to focus more on conventional aspects, such as a *paian*-tag, address to Apollo Paian, use of *euphēmia*, and so on. The conventional features are certainly those selected by Hellenistic grammarians for their system of classification.

Whereas the core purpose of the genre must remain fixed, the conventions that surround it are, to an extent, flexible, and it is these that are adapted and played with for literary interest. However, as with any play on literary conventions, there are limits to what a poet can realistically do. If too many of the norms are violated, the poem may move too far from the audience's understanding of how a particular genre should present itself. In this case, it ceases to be an interesting play on convention, and simply becomes unintelligible as an example of that genre.

SLIPPERY NAMES AND GENRE INEQUALITY: CHOOSING WHAT COUNTS AS A GENRE

The model I have outlined gives us scope to define a genre more loosely than a 'Platonic Forms' model would allow, but more tightly

²⁴ Rutherford (2001a) 6–7.

than a purely Wittgensteinian approach will permit. It is not surprising in the case of lyric genres that we should reject the idea that groups have no single common feature. Genres are human concepts, and their purpose is to structure and define (albeit loosely): it is no trick of language that certain poems are referred to as *paianes*, and for a poet composing a *paian*, the set of pre-existing ideas about what is typical of a *paian* will provide him with a starting point.

The next problem we face is to decide what counts as a genre. As we have seen, genre-names are a minefield of confusion and the terms used often have broader or narrower scopes than the songs themselves. Not all the terms used to describe genres have the same status, and some may not be usefully definable by the model I have outlined. This is partly to do with the loose way that people use language when referring to poetic and musical categories. If Aristophanes makes a passing reference to a *prosodion* or a *hymnos*, his priority is to communicate something to his audience, not to use musical terminology correctly. Linguistic slipperiness can create what appear to be definitional problems, but in practice these issues often turn out to tell us no more than that the Greeks used different words to refer to the same concept. Our belief that genre-names refer to genuine entities should not be shaken by variations in the terminology used, or by the fact that ancient authors may not use a particular word at all. The absence of a specific word for a concept does not imply the absence of that concept. English may lack a word for ‘Schadenfreude’, but that does not mean that native speakers lack a concept of taking pleasure in another’s misfortunes until they have had the German word explained to them. Rather, they recognize the emotion, even if they do not have a particular label for it.²⁵ Nevertheless, with ancient Greek genres, we face the problem that all we know comes through the filter of the language and terminology used varyingly by classical and Hellenistic writers. To ascertain which genre-words reflect genuinely discrete concepts, some care is required.

For example, let us take *epinikia*. We might expect this genre to pose for us the fewest definitional issues of any lyric genre, since the

²⁵ Example taken from Pinker (1999) 367.

large number of poems which survive intact makes it possible to compile detailed information about characteristic features. In addition, the purpose the poems were composed for is clear, and we know a reasonable amount about the contexts in which they were commissioned. Nevertheless, the word *ἐπινίκιον* itself is used loosely, and we do not always find a one-to-one correlation between the use of the word and the lyric genre we understand it to refer to. *ἐπινίκιον* is the neuter form of the adjective: we are presumably meant to supply *μέλος*. *τὰ ἐπινίκια*, then, means ‘things to do with victory’, and so can be used more broadly than for just the victory-song: for example, Demosthenes uses it to refer to the party held to celebrate an athletic victory (*Against Neaira* 33.9). Similarly, the victory itself need not be specifically athletic: Plato uses the word to refer to the celebratory sacrifice for Agathon’s victory in the tragic competition (*Symp.* 174a). The vocabulary for praise-poetry in general can also be slippery. Just as an *ἐπινίκιον* is not always an athletic praise-song, an athletic praise-song is not always an *ἐπινίκιον*. In a passage of the *Laws*, Plato refers to them as *enkōmia*:

εἰ μὲν ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ... ἐγκώμια τε ποιοῦντες ἡδόμεν τὸν ἡττώμενον νενικηκότα, οὔτε ὀρθῶς ἂν οὔτ’ οἶμαι προσφιλῶς τοῖς δρομεύσιν ἡμᾶς ἂν τὰ ἐγκώμια προσάπτειν. (*Laws* 7.822b)²⁶

If at Olympia . . . when we sang *enkōmia* we sang about the loser as though he were the winner, I do not think the *enkōmia* we showered on the runners would be appropriate or welcome to them.

This seems to be a case of a wider definition being used to stand for a rather more specific concept that is felt to fall within it. The word *ἐγκώμιον* is used elsewhere by Plato to denote a general eulogy, without any athletic connotations; Aristotle attempts to define it as a composition in honour of particular deeds (*Rhet.* 1367^b27–35), and we also know of prose *enkōmia*.²⁷ Similarly we are told of *enkōmia* as

²⁶ The word is used in the same sense at Plato, *Lysis* 205c–e.

²⁷ For *ἐγκώμιον* as a eulogy, cf. e.g. Pl. *Prot.* 326a2, *Rep.* 607a4, *Laws* 801e3, 829c3, 958e9. Conversely, Pl. *Symp.* 177b1, 212c1, and *Laws* 801e1 use *ἐγκώμιον* of a praise poem directed to the gods, contravening Proclus’ distinctions between religious and secular forms of song (cf. also Aphth. *Progym.* 8: τὸ μὲν ὕμνον εἶναι θεῶν, τὸ δ’ ἐγκώνιον θνητῶν). For the difficulties of defining *enkōmion*, see Harvey (1955) 160–4.

being an expected part of other genres, such as *thrēnos* where they fulfilled the function of eulogizing the dead.²⁸ Describing an *epinikion* as an *ἐγκώμιον*, like calling a celebration of a dramatic victory an *ἐπινίκιον*, highlights the problems that emerge if we think of this vocabulary as representing formal genre-definitions. However, there is indisputably a distinct category of songs composed for athletic victory which share a number of common features and motifs. The word *ἐπινίκιον* may be slippery, but the category we use it to describe is not.

We must be cautious, then, about attributing too much significance to the casual way in which the Greeks themselves use language. Confusion in the way genre-terms are used in ancient texts does not necessarily equate with actual confusion over the core meaning of the genre. However, the difficulties with genre-words are not always reducible to carelessness with terminology. Sometimes we find words used apparently to indicate genres, but where on analysis it is not possible to define a single and intelligible genre from what they describe.

For example, as we have already seen in Proclus, the word *ὕμνος* is used with an extremely wide range of meanings. At one end of the scale, Plato uses it at *Laws* 3.700b to describe a specific genre, distinct from the *paian* or *dithyrambos*. At the other extreme, the word can commonly be used of any kind of singing, for example Demodocus' song at the Phaeacian feast or Pindar's victory songs, whose function is not primarily religious.²⁹ The word is also frequently used somewhere between these two extremes, to denote a general term for songs in honour of the gods. Was there a true genre of songs called *hymnos*, which would have been regarded as distinct from other religious genres such as *paian*? Or is *ὕμνος* better understood as a catch-all term for religious songs, of which other genres such as *paianes* form sub-categories? For the purpose of this book, I have taken the latter view. There are clearly continuities and conventions within the category of religious song, and it is therefore possible to describe

²⁸ Cf. Hor. *Odes* 4.2.21–4; Aristocles *ap.* Ammon. *περὶ διαφορ. λέξ.* 178.4; Didymus *ap.* Orion *ε* 58.7.

²⁹ Hom. *Od.* 8.429; Pind. *Ol.* 1.8, 3.3, *Nem.* 8.50.

something as ‘hymnic’.³⁰ Nevertheless, it seems difficult to be more specific about *hymnos* as a genre, and it is striking that Furley and Bremer’s book on Greek hymns includes a range of religious songs drawn from a number of contexts (including *paianes*).³¹

Conversely, a category such as *prosodia* poses exactly the opposite problem. The word refers to a type of religious song, presumably sung in procession.³² *Prosodia* are listed in sources alongside other genre-names as though they form a distinct type, and we know that they formed one of the Alexandrian divisions of Pindar’s poetry.³³ Yet we are never told of anything which makes a song a *prosodion* except the manner of its performance. The surviving fragments which scholars (following D’Alessio) now believe to have been classified as *prosodia* by the Alexandrians had been previously identified as *paianes*.³⁴ Whatever the performance features of the *prosodion*, then, they seem to have left little impact on the words of the songs, which show no evidence of having been processional pieces.³⁵ In an earlier period the term *προσόδιον* may have been used as shorthand for the performance context of a religious song, but it seems likely that by the Alexandrian period there was no meaningful criterion on which to categorize texts as *prosodia* when viewed in isolation from their original performance.³⁶ Nor does the search for unifying features in surviving processional songs (for example tragic *parodoi*) give us any assistance. For a start, this methodology would be worryingly circular, as it would require us to use the tragic texts to define the features of an otherwise unknown genre, in order to then read allusions to that genre back into the same passages. Secondly, tragic processions vary greatly in their style, tone, and diction (for

³⁰ See Janko (1981); Depew (2000) on hymnic features and continuities.

³¹ See Furley and Bremer (2001) ch. 1 on defining the ancient hymn.

³² Cf. scholiast on Aristoph. *Birds* 853; *Suda* π 2756 = iv.229.26 Adler.

³³ For Pindaric *prosodia*, *Suda* π 1617 = iv.132.26 Adler. Aristox. 82.10 and Ath. 6.253b list *prosodia* as on a par with *paianes*, while Eust. 34.3 puts them in a longer list of genres including *paianes*, *parthenēia*, *dithyramboi*, and *epinikia*.

³⁴ See D’Alessio (1997).

³⁵ Cf. Rutherford (2001b) 715–16.

³⁶ Rutherford (2001b) therefore suggests that *prosodion* was used by Alexandrian scholars as a ‘default category’ for poems that failed to fit into another genre.

example, the processional song which ends *Eumenides* bears little resemblance to the one which opens *Persians*).

In practice, the lesson to draw is that we need to treat each potential genre individually and accept that different genres may bear a different level of definition. How thoroughly we can define a genre will depend partly on how distinctive the concept would in fact have been to a Greek audience, and partly on whether we have enough evidence to ascertain what makes the genre distinct. For the purposes of this book, I have selected five genres for examination: *paian*, *epinikion*, *partheneia*, *hymenaios*, and *thrēnos*. These genres cover a cross-section of the types of songs and the various performance functions we find in lyric poetry. They include both religious and secular occasions, and poems composed both for private individuals and for the community as a whole. They cover songs performed by men and by women, and across different age-groups. They also demonstrate a range of different issues involved in dealing with genres. For example, we have a great many surviving *epinikia*, but very few *hymenaios* or *thrēnoi*. On the other hand, we have a clear concept of what a *thrēnos* was used for, while the picture for *partheneia* is much less clear. For *hymenaios* or *paianes* we find clear identifying features, whereas for *partheneia* or *epinikia* we tend to be reliant on more subjective aspects of style and imagery.

For each of the genres I have selected, I will analyse what evidence we have for the genre as a distinct conceptual unit in the classical period, and attempt to create a workable picture using the model outlined above, before looking at how the genre is reflected in tragedy.

DITHYRAMBOS: A SPECIAL CASE

An obvious omission from my list of genres is *dithyrambos*, a genre which is something of a special case. In one sense, we know considerably more about *dithyrambos* than about many Greek genres: we have a number of statements from ancient sources about *dithyrambos* as a genre, we know that in Athens the songs were performed as part of the festivities of the Great Dionysia, and we have several surviving

dithyramboi composed for various *poleis*, which have been the subject of recent scholarly interest.³⁷ On the other hand, suggesting a meaningful definition of *dithyrambos* has proved particularly contentious.³⁸ The major problem is that ancient descriptions of *dithyrambos* bear little relation to the surviving fragments. Thus, for example, ancient writers repeatedly tell us that the *dithyrambos* was a genre particularly associated with Dionysus, and that it included Dionysiac features such as wild and abandoned dancing.³⁹ The association between the *dithyrambos* and Dionysus still continues to have currency with many modern scholars.⁴⁰ Yet the *dithyramboi* of Pindar and Bacchylides show little evidence of being Dionysiac in their themes or preoccupations, and it is therefore difficult to reconcile the extant texts with the ancient testimony. Conversely, if we instead try to define *dithyrambos* by finding continuities within the surviving poems (for example by looking for an emphasis on narrative), we face the difficulty of how to explain away the connection with Dionysus made by later writers. In order to explain this incongruity, scholars have posited the existence of an early ‘cultic’ or Dionysiac *dithyrambos*, which was later abandoned or evolved into the narrative *dithyramboi* we possess.⁴¹ To make matters more confusing, in the late fifth century the *dithyrambos* faced yet another evolution under the influence of the New Music: hence the term ‘dithyrambic’ to describe certain odes in late Euripides which bear little resemblance to the *dithyramboi* of Bacchylides.⁴²

³⁷ Cf. e.g. Zimmermann (1992); Bagordo and Zimmermann (2000); Fearn (2007).

³⁸ Cf. Harvey (1955) 174: ‘what sort of poems Bacchylides’ “dithyrambs” originally were is a mystery’.

³⁹ The association between *dithyrambos* and Dionysus dates back to the archaic period: cf. Archil. fr. 120 W: ὡς Διονύσου ἀνακτος καλὸν ἐξάρξαι μέλος / οἶδα διθύραμβον οἶνω συγκεραυνωθείς φρένας (‘I know how to lead off the *dithyrambos*, the lovely song of lord Dionysus, when my mind is shattered by wine’). We also find explicit links to Dionysus in classical authors: cf. Aesch. fr. 355 Radt; Eur. *Bacch.* 526; Pl. *Laws* 700b.

⁴⁰ See Privitera (1970) 120–30; Zimmermann (1992); Ieranò (1997); Garcia Romero (2000); Bremer (2000).

⁴¹ See Fearn (2007) 181–6 for a criticism of this position.

⁴² For *dithyrambos* and the ‘New Music’, see Csapo (2004); D’Angour (2007); for ‘dithyrambic’ odes in tragedy see Allan (2008) 40–1, 293–4.

For the purposes of this book, whose aim is to explore the influence of lyric poetry on tragedy, this leaves us in a difficult position. It makes little sense to look for references to the Dionysiac or 'ritual' *dithyrambos*, as we have little evidence for its existence and, short of defining all Dionysiac language in tragedy as 'dithyrambic', no basis on which to identify tragic allusions. Since all we know about the ritual *dithyrambos* (assuming it existed at all) is that it is somehow linked with Dionysus, any attempt to find it in tragedy would be hopelessly circular and would hardly provide us with illuminating readings. In any case, even if we could be sure that the Dionysiac *dithyrambos* did exist, it seems unlikely that it would be embedded in the minds of a tragic audience, whose experience of *dithyramboi* would be shaped by the performances of the narrative *dithyramboi* they heard at the Dionysia and other festivals. It might be tempting then to take 'narrative' as a better definition of *dithyrambos* and look for allusions on that basis. Yet here too we are left with very little on which to build. While *dithyramboi* may indeed contain narrative content, they are not the only type of poetry to do so, and we can hardly identify a tragic passage as dithyrambic simply because it tells a story.⁴³ Other generic features prove equally elusive: scholars have failed to find anything convincingly distinctive about, for example, language, formal features, or use of myth.⁴⁴

On analysis, the difficulties in defining *dithyrambos* relate to the importance of performance context in archaic and classical genre-definition. While other lyric genres are tied to ritual occasions, *dithyrambos* appears to have been more flexible. Fearn's recent monograph suggests that the term *κύκλιος χορός* ('circular chorus', which scholars have often treated as synonymous with *dithyrambos*) in fact may have been used of a range of ritual contexts with varying religious affiliations and functions.⁴⁵ If grammarians later used *κύκλιος χορός* as another expression for *dithyrambos*, and thus used

⁴³ For example, the extended mythological narrative in Bacchylides 5 demonstrates that *epinikia* could, if desired, make use of narrative as a lyric device. If we did not have the beginning and end of the poem, which marks it clearly as an *epinikion*, would we be tempted to classify it as a *dithyrambos*? For narrative in choral lyric more generally, see Rutherford (2007).

⁴⁴ See Fearn (2007) 174–81.

⁴⁵ Fearn (2007) 179.

it as a classificatory device, this would partly explain the lack of coherence in the category as we have it. Moreover, in an Athenian context, the competitive nature of dithyrambic performance is central to understanding the genre's development. Whereas a *paian* or a *hymenaios* is regulated by its role in the life of the community, Athenian *dithyramboi* were performed in a context where, like tragedy, their function was to win a competition, and the *dithyramboi* that an Athenian tragic audience were familiar with would have been these non-ritual competition-pieces. Whether or not one believes in a 'ritual' element to tragedy, any such element is much more attenuated than in other ritual forms of poetry: one can argue coherently against seeing tragedy as ritual, whereas it would be impossible to deny ritual elements to the *paian*.⁴⁶

In the case of tragedy, regardless of whether we posit any early ritual form, the plays that survive come from a highly developed competitive context, where the plays' relationship with the Dionysiac elements of the festival is rather less straightforward than the *paian*'s relationship with the celebration of Apollo. Whereas ritual performance constructs itself as conservative and stresses its links with past practice, tragedy was under pressure to innovate, as the poets aimed to interest their audience and to make their plays stand out from those of other competitors. Similarly, Athenian *dithyrambos* took the form of a competition between multiple poets each year: it seems likely, then, that the same pressure applied. Thus *dithyrambos*, as a tragic audience knew it, does not fit into the functionally driven model I have outlined for most archaic and classical genres: we should perhaps understand it as a genre whose status is more like the literary constructs of English or Latin literary theory. This is not to suggest that tragedy cannot allude to *dithyrambos*, for the tragedians could in principle choose to do so just as they could choose to allude to the Homeric poems or indeed to other tragedies. However, tragic allusions to *dithyrambos* would consist primarily of an allusion to another art-form, not an allusion to a culturally embedded ritual. Moreover, the freedom of *dithyrambos*, which has made it so hard to define, makes it difficult to identify features for the purpose of

⁴⁶ See Scullion (2002).

allusion: this difficulty must have existed in the classical past as well as for us today. Thus, while the relationship between tragedy and *dithyrambos* is undoubtedly a subject on which interesting scholarship could be written, it is not within the scope of my interests here.

HOW TO THINK ABOUT GENRES IN TRAGEDY

The mimetic nature of tragedy makes it a particularly voracious genre, adept at incorporating and referring to other forms. The tragic chorus is a chorus in its own right, playing a functional and structural role within the genre. Yet the language with which tragic choruses express themselves often draws on the language of other genres and other types of choruses. This is not surprising: choral poetry forms a central part of Greek religious and cultural identity, and its *topoi* create a shared network of social *mores* and normative assumptions about how one celebrates a wedding, relates to a god, and so on. Moreover, the shared form of both tragic and non-tragic choruses means that it is easy to see how aspects of one type might be adopted by the other.

Tragedy's ability to incorporate other genres is enhanced by the fact that tragedy (like *dithyrambos*) is not as bound by its own performance function as a ritual chorus is. The tragic chorus's role as a chorus performing within the festival context of the Dionysia is blurred by the fact that it simultaneously claims a second identity as a different group in the fictional world of the play. In any case, the 'rules' for the tragic chorus, *qua* Dionysia festival chorus, are no more than that it should perform the relevant sections of the plays. Conversely, a paeanic chorus has a set role and function: to perform a particular type of song, for a particular occasion. The incorporation of material from other genres into a *paian* could only be permissible insofar as it is not detrimental to the *paian* achieving its own ritual function. Thus, by its nature tragedy is freer to explore other types of poetry and display them in its own lyrics than is non-tragic poetry, which is bound much more directly to the needs of a particular occasion.

References (or allusions, as I shall call them) to lyric genres in tragedy are common.⁴⁷ But when we talk about tragedy alluding to a lyric genre, we are not dealing with faithful replications of whole pieces of lyric poetry. We rarely (if ever) in tragedy find something which could be an example of a piece from another genre incorporated wholesale into a play, and we rarely find a direct allusion to a particularly famous piece.⁴⁸ Rather, tragedy uses motifs from lyric to trigger awareness of a genre, and to evoke a mood influenced by that genre.⁴⁹ In practice, the tragedians make use of verbal and imagistic cues to create this awareness, and signal the relevance of the genre with devices ranging from specific ritual tags to broader thematic resonances.

Levels of generic interaction

If the ways in which the tragedians choose to allude to genres vary, so too does the level of detail and richness with which they engage with lyric material. At the one extreme, a genre can be evoked in such a way that its connotations or performance features impact minimally on the play—indeed, *qua* genre, it is hardly relevant at all. At the other end of the scale, a play can use a genre in a rich and sophisticated way, such that the themes latent in the genre tie into and enhance our understanding of the themes of the play.

By structuring generic interaction into three categories (low-, medium-, and high-level interaction), I do not intend to imply that all references to genre in tragedy must fit neatly into one of these categories; rather, we should expect to find a continuum as to how

⁴⁷ By 'allusion' I mean an echoing of the general form and motifs of the genre, rather than the stricter (and more conventional) sense of references to particular authors and instantiations. A more accurate term would be 'generic interaction', but it would be cumbersome to use throughout, so for the rest of this book I will also use 'allusion' or 'allude' in this more generic sense.

⁴⁸ This is in my view the problem with the approach of Bagordo (2003), who excludes broader aspects of allusion and looks for specific and intentional references to particular lyric passages. Similarly, Garner (1989) focuses on 'allusion' in the strict sense of the word: a strategy which works better for Homeric parallels than for lyric ones.

⁴⁹ Cf. Rutherford (1995a) 118–21.

significant a role the tragedians allow a lyric genre to play. However, these categories are useful to think with as they help us to understand the ways that a genre can affect our interpretation of the play. We can better appreciate the levels on which tragedy and lyric engage by looking at examples: those I have chosen all refer to one genre, the *paian*.

Low-level interaction

At the bottom of the scale, we find references to genres which are little more than superficial. At the most extreme the genre may be almost entirely effaced from the reference. For example, at Aeschylus' *Suppliants* 1066 the hand of Zeus is called *παιώνιος* (*χειρὶ παιωνίᾳ κατασχεῶν*). The epithet refers purely to the power of the god to heal and protect. While this is in a sense linked with the *paian*, the musical and generic connotations of the word do not seem important, and this is demonstrated by the shifting of the epithet from Apollo to Zeus.

Even if the genre is relevant, the relevance may be no more than passing. For example, at the end of the *Seven*, the Chorus refer to the lament over the bodies of Eteocles and Polynices as a *paian* for Hades (*Αἶδα τ' / ἐχθρὸν παῖαν*, 869–70). Here the function and connotations of the *paian* are the point of the image. Calling the song a *paian* is ironic because, far from being a celebration, it is in fact a lament: an inversion of religious and musical ideals. The recipient of the song, Hades, is the opposite of Paian/Apollo, associated with death and darkness instead of healing and light. This ironic use of the word *paian*, to refer to something which is exactly the opposite, is found quite commonly in tragedy.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the role of the *paian* in celebrating military victory may also be relevant; the *paian* here is in one sense functionally appropriate, and in another sense perverted. However, the use is straightforward, and its ramifications limited. Calling the *thrēnos* a *paian* is ironic in the short term, but it does not affect how we interpret the rest of the song, or the rest of the play. Nor is there any further allusion to the themes of the *paian* within the

⁵⁰ e.g. Aesch. *Ag.* 645; Eur. *Hel.* 177. See Hutchinson (1985) on 870.

song itself. In poetic terms, the reference is of limited interest, although quick references like these do make clear that the audience is expected to be familiar with the genre evoked and to understand the connotations of the allusion.

Medium-level interaction

A more developed strategy is when individual songs within a play make a more sustained use of a genre. For example, the first words of the *parodos* of *Antigone* (100) appear to be an echo of Pindar, *Paian* 9 S–M: both begin with an address to the sun, and the words ἀκτὶς ἀέλιου.⁵¹ The Theban setting of both texts makes a connection relevant. There is some thematic play between the two which strengthens the connection: in particular use of horse-riding imagery (Pind. *Pa.* 9.6, Soph. *Ant.* 108–9).⁵² There is also a functional irony. Pindar's *paian* is an apotropaic *paian* after a natural disaster, while the *Antigone parodos* is a celebration after a successful battle. Both are appropriate *paian* functions, but they highlight the contrasting roles the genre can play.⁵³

One could even argue that the irony could be taken a stage further. The Chorus believe that the victory over the Thebans is a cause for celebration and an end to their troubles. The audience is aware that it will bring about further suffering and death for the royal family. An apotropaic *paian* is in fact just as relevant as a celebratory one. Pindar's *paian* is therefore relevant to interpreting the *parodos* of *Antigone*. Indeed, while the ode has few of the formal features of the *paian*, it could be seen to play the role of a *paian*. However, the fact that Sophocles chooses to allude to Pindar's *paian* here does not inform the rest of *Antigone*. The paeanic nature of the ode is not important for the following action, or referred to later in the

⁵¹ The only total solar eclipse within Pindar's career was in 463 BC, but it is also possible the poem refers to the annular eclipse of 478 BC. In any case, this is significantly before the *Antigone*, which was probably composed in the 440s or later. See Rutherford (2001a) 199.

⁵² Cf. Rutherford (2001a) 192.

⁵³ Rutherford (2001a) 199–200.

text. In other words, the reference to the *paian* in the *parodos* is fundamentally self-contained. Moreover, it is balanced by the praise of Dionysus later in the ode (148–54); the introduction of Dionysus into a song which has previously evoked an Apolline genre acts as a clue that the reference to the *paian* should not be taken too far. Even in the *parodos*, let alone in the rest of the play, the *paian* does not dominate.

High-level interaction

The most sophisticated level of generic interaction is where the reference works in two ways. Firstly, the play evokes a particular lyric genre by alluding to the motifs, *topoi*, or stylistic features of the genre. Secondly, the evocation of a particular genre is connected to the play in wider terms. It is thematically relevant that we are made to think of the genre: doing so develops our understanding of the purpose of the ode, or brings out a theme in the play. Furthermore, the reference to the genre may not be limited to one particular ode, but can be spread throughout the play.

An example can be found at *Philoctetes* 827–32. Here the Chorus appeal to Sleep to help Philoctetes after his attack of sudden pain. The text is more thoroughly linked to the *paian*-genre than is the *parodos* of *Antigone*. The Chorus appeal directly to Paion (the Attic form of Paian), in a phrase which resembles a paeanic refrain (*ἴθι ἴθι μοι, Παιών*, 832). The vocabulary they use is reminiscent of the language of the *paian*, in particular the repetition of ritually appropriate words (*εὐαῆς ἡμῖν ἔλθοις, εὐαίων / εὐαίων*, 829–30), and the use of *αἶγλαν* (831).⁵⁴ The song is a *paian* in a functional sense: it is a prayer for healing. The paeanic nature of the ode also has an ironic role, as Rutherford notes.⁵⁵ Lulling Philoctetes to sleep may serve to heal his pain, but its purpose is to steal the bow. Its healing function is therefore undermined by hypocritical intent. The irony is further

⁵⁴ For the relevance of the *paian* here see Pearson (1911); Haldane (1963); Rutherford (2001a) 109–10. For a discussion of paeanic features, see Ch. 3 below.

⁵⁵ Rutherford (1995a) 128–9.

highlighted by the theme of sight in the ode.⁵⁶ The Chorus ask Paian to hold up the healing light to Philoctetes' eyes at 830, but then go on to describe his sleeping state as 'without eyes' (*ἀνόμματος*, 856). Not only does this expose the hypocrisy of the prayer, it does so by playing on the ritual language normally associated with the *paian*, the imagery of light and sight (see further Chapter 3 below).

The interaction between the *Philoctetes* passage and the *paian* is complex, and the associations of the *paian* enrich our interpretation of the ode. Moreover, healing, and specifically the healing of Philoctetes, is thematically relevant. Philoctetes' sickness and the apparent impossibility of healing him, is highlighted from the opening scene, while the play closes with the promise of future healing in Troy. The themes of the genre thus mesh with the themes of the play, and reinforce a strand of imagery which we might otherwise overlook.

The power that high-level generic interaction holds is connected to the prevalence of choral performance in Greek culture. An allusion to a type of song performed by a ritual chorus would not be something high or literary, but spring from the song-dance culture which formed a significant part of the audience's daily life, and shaped their training in social and cultural norms.⁵⁷ In many cases, the effect would be rather analogous to that of a modern audience watching a play containing the line 'in sickness and in health'—it would not require elite education or the help of a literary critic for us to make the connection to our modern marriage ritual. Similarly, a Greek hearing a cluster of language which evoked a *hymenaios* (perhaps in association with characteristic elements of music and movement) would recognize the association quickly and without conscious effort. Evoking the genre also means evoking the cultural assumptions bound up in it, so that these too are brought to the forefront of the audience's interpretation of the play.

⁵⁶ Cf. Rutherford (1995a) 129.

⁵⁷ The relevance of any particular genre to a 5th-cent. Athenian obviously depends on the prevalence of that genre in Athens: for an Athenian, *paian* is more familiar from contemporary practice than *epinikion*. See Ch. 2 for a discussion of this issue.

Plays chosen for this book

This book is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of all the examples of generic interaction in Greek tragedy: such a study would take a lifetime to complete and would also require considerable repetition. Rather, for each genre discussed, I outline a range of ways in which tragedy engages with the genre, and then choose two or three plays to examine in detail as case studies. My intention is to show how powerful a tool generic interaction can be: as such, the plays chosen for close reading are ones in which the use of the genre is rich and extensive, where references to it are not limited to one particular choral ode, and where the genre is relevant to the play on a deep and thematic level. This should not be taken to imply that the majority of tragedy's references to lyric fall into this category.

Equally, structuring this book by lyric genre means that I discuss plays primarily in terms of their relation to one particular genre. This should not be taken to mean that a play *can* only refer to one genre. For example, I use Euripides' *Electra* as a case study of allusion to *epinikion*. However, while *epinikion* is the genre most extensively referenced in the play, it is not the only one present. The *parodos* alludes to *partheneia*, with the Chorus's references to ritual activity for a goddess in charge of female transitions, and a focus on adornment and female finery (167–97). This reference is picked up a little later, as Electra describes herself as a liminal figure caught between the worlds of *parthenos* and *gunē* (310–13). Electra's betrothal to Pylades at the end of the play signifies that she has finally left her problematic liminal status and made the transition to full maturity, a theme we find elsewhere in tragedies which evoke *partheneia* (cf. Chapter 5 below). The parthenaic allusions, then, may not be as sustained as the epinician language we find elsewhere in the play, but they also give us cues to interpreting the significance of particular motifs. Similarly, while I discuss *Alcestis* in relation to *thrēnos*, the play is also rich in paeanic and epinician imagery, which I discuss briefly in the relevant chapters, and explore more fully elsewhere.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ See Swift (forthcoming a).

On the other hand, the plays used as case studies are chosen because they demonstrate a particularly rich engagement with one genre; it is therefore not surprising if, in these particular plays, that genre dominates, even if it does not exclude others. Critics of my position could no doubt argue that choosing plays of this nature and focusing on the most significant genre within each play distorts our picture of the engagement between tragedy and lyric, in that it disproportionately represents the most sophisticated end. However, the aim of this book is to explore how generic interaction can change our understanding of tragedy; we therefore learn most from examining the most sophisticated and interesting end of the scale. Nevertheless, each chapter also contains an overview of the ways in which tragedy evokes the genre under discussion, which draws out broader themes and patterns. Moreover, in order to correct any imbalance in my choice of case studies, I have included as an appendix to my book a table outlining all the clusters of generic interaction and related patterns of imagery, I have found in my reading of tragedy.

In terms of each individual play, my methodology is to build a case by cumulative effect. Some generic references are clear-cut: for example, a paeanic ritual tag or an address to Hymen. More often, though, they are more subjective: evocative words, strands of imagery, cultic references. In these cases, whether an individual motif counts as a genre reference or not will be a matter of opinion. However, where we find a clustering of motifs, all of which have a claim to be connected with the genre, the sum of the evidence can outweigh its parts. Individual readers may disagree on a case-by-case basis with some of what I select as evidence in my close reading of individual odes. However, if the overall body of material is strong enough, whether an individual element is rejected or accepted should not affect the case that a generic allusion is being made.

Conclusion

The conceptual problems surrounding lyric genres are significant ones, and there is no way to overcome the essential issue that too little lyric poetry survives for us to reach firm conclusions about generic categorization. However, while we cannot change our

material, we can attempt to hone the tools with which we approach it. In this chapter, I have attempted to set out some methodological approaches with which we can arrive at a clearer picture of genre-theory in general, and of Greek lyric in particular, and to outline the approach I will take for the remainder of this book.

What emerges most forcefully both from an analysis of Greek genres in theory, and from a discussion of the ideology of genres in practice, is the importance of performance occasions. Recognizing the importance of performance contexts to ancient literature is one of the most significant modern developments in classical studies, and it has paved the way to a new understanding of lyric genres. Lyric genres are bound by the occasion for which they are written, and it is the role that occasion plays in the community which shapes both the nature of the poetry and the audience's responses to it. The fact that lyric poetry is tied to a particular occasion means that when the poetry is transplanted into a different context, the original associations it carries come with it. Thus, referring to lyric genres is an effective way to evoke cultural and social norms, as well as literary and poetic models.

The importance of performance context, however, raises a further set of questions, for the performance context of a piece of lyric poetry was not the same as the context in which the tragedians reworked it for their fifth-century audience. Before we can begin examining lyric allusions in tragedy, then, we need to explore the ways in which lyric genres were known and understood in fifth-century Athens, and the values which they would have represented to an Athenian audience.

Lyric Poetry in an Athenian Context

The underlying premiss of this book is that lyric poetry embodies a particular set of norms and cultural expectations which derive from the social and ritual functions that the genres fulfilled. When the tragedians allude to a lyric genre they evoke these associations in the minds of their audience and can manipulate them to create dramatic effects. A lyric genre holds a normative status: it sets down conventions for how to respond to a set of circumstances, whether a natural disaster, a death, a wedding, or an athletic success. Alluding to lyric therefore evokes not only the circumstances in which the songs were performed but also the beliefs associated with the poetry and its performance. So generic interaction is not just another form of intertextuality; rather, it carries particular power for a Greek audience because of the role choral poetry played in expressing and teaching the core values of communities.

This chapter seeks to ground our investigations in the social and cultural contexts of fifth-century Athens, and to explore the meanings that lyric poetry held in the *polis*. The first step is to examine the role the chorus held in Greek society, with a particular emphasis on Athens. As we shall see, the chorus is integral to Greek daily life and is used to mark the most significant moments in the life of an individual or of the community. The frequency with which choruses performed means that the average Greek would have been regularly exposed to choral performance, and would, like Plato's Athenian in *Laws*, have perceived the chorus as a tool for civic training as well as a feature of daily life (2.654a). The picture becomes more complicated, however, when we recall that the original audiences of Alcman or Pindar are not the audiences for whom the tragedians are

composing. Before we can examine lyric allusions in particular plays, we need to consider what exposure a tragic audience would have had to archaic or non-Athenian lyric poetry. The second part of this chapter will explore this question from various angles, including the wider issue of how Athenians regarded elite material. I will draw on literary and archaeological evidence for the accessibility of lyric poetry and sympotic culture more generally, and argue that Athenian culture was fundamentally aspirational in its portrayal of aristocratic lifestyles and cultural material. Finally, if we are to examine the way in which lyric material evokes core values, we must briefly consider tragedy's own relationship to the *polis* that produced it and to the core values of Athens herself.

EXPOSURE TO CHORUSES

Choral performance permeated every aspect of Greek life, whether private or public, religious or secular.¹ Our evidence for choruses in Greek culture dates back as far as our earliest texts: at the opening of the *Iliad*, the Achaeans sing a *paian* as part of the ceremony to placate Apollo (1.472–4), whilst the wedding celebration in the city at peace on the shield of Achilles includes the performance of a *hymenaios* (18.492–6). Thus, from the beginnings of the Greek literary tradition, we see the chorus already used to mark significant moments, whether significant to the community as a whole or as a *rite de passage* in the life of an individual. By its performance the chorus symbolizes and reaffirms the values associated with these events, through the expression of conventional *topoi* and gnomic wisdom.²

An ordinary Greek would have had a range of opportunities to observe, and indeed participate in, choral performance. Choruses organized for private functions would presumably have been recruited by the family in question. Wedding choruses portray themselves as personally connected to the couple: if this reflects actual

¹ For Greek culture as 'song-culture', see Herington (1985).

² For the importance of performance in gaining authority, see Kowalzig (2007) 43–55.

practice, it suggests that private choruses were often an *ad hoc* group of friends and acquaintances.³ Similarly, the stipulations against hiring professional mourners suggest that funeral song was, properly speaking, meant to be performed by the friends and relatives of the deceased, like the Trojan women who join Hector's relatives in performing their ritual lament (*Il.* 24.720–2, 746).⁴

Choruses also performed at the dozens of festivals which marked the ritual year of a Greek *polis*. The most famous of these, the tragic, comic, and dithyrambic choruses, have been much studied by modern scholars.⁵ Yet alongside them numerous smaller-scale equivalents must have existed, less lavishly funded and highly trained but nevertheless an integral part of the Greek religious experience. The more informal nature of this type of chorus might well have made the bar to participation a lower one. Yet even for competitive choruses, the sheer number of performances must have meant that a substantial number of Athenian citizens would have had direct experience of dancing in a chorus. This is particularly true for the dithyrambic choral competitions, where the chorus is not only large but also recruited from a single tribe. Since each tribe had to recruit fifty men and fifty boys every year (leaving aside the dithyrambic performances also required at the Thargelia), it seems likely that a large number of Athenian males would have participated at some point in their lives.⁶ The tragic chorus is a more selective institution and required a higher level of skill, for a tragic choreut had to perform in

³ For example, the admiration and banter in wedding poetry constructs a personal relationship between the chorus and the bride or groom: cf. Sapph. fr. 108, 111, 112, 113, 115 V; Theocritus 18 (where the chorus are explicitly Helen's companions). In Sapph. fr. 30 and 113 V the chorus can speak with authority about the match between the couple. See Ch. 6 for further discussion.

⁴ For funerary restrictions cf. Plut. *Sol.* 21; Dem. 43.62; Cic. *de Leg.* 2.59–66, and see Ch. 7.

⁵ Cf. e.g. Pickard-Cambridge (1962); Wilson (2000). See Herington (1985) 84–97 on Athenian choral festivals.

⁶ The population of Athens is a subject of much debate, though modern scholars tend to put the population of adult male citizens in the range of 20,000–30,000, so one could estimate roughly that between 5 and 10% of the citizen population could be involved in the choral performances at the Dionysia, Lenaia, and Thargelia. For a recent discussion of the issues involved in population estimates, see Hansen (2006) ch. 2.

four separate plays, and memorize numerous odes for each one.⁷ Yet even tragedy involved three choruses of fifteen citizens every year: if we were to imagine that a typical Athenian began to attend the theatre as a teenager and lived to a moderate age in his forties or fifties, he would have seen over a thousand choreuts participate in the tragedy competition alone. Over the course of a single year, the two major dramatic festivals (Dionysia and Lenaia) provide a total of 1,315 slots available for choreuts in the tragedy, comedy, and dithyramb competitions, which rises to 1,815 once we include the additional dithyrambic choruses which performed at the Thargelia.⁸ Moreover, this calculation fails to include other choral performances where the numbers are uncertain (for example the *kuklioi choroi* of the Panathenaia), or other performances which are disputed (for example, whether or not choruses performed at the Anthesteria), let alone the vast numbers of minor festivals where choruses would have performed with no formal support from state *leitourgiai*. With this wealth of choral opportunities available, Plato's identification of the man with no choral experience as 'uneducated' seems hardly surprising (*Laws* 2.654a).

It is equally unsurprising that Plato regards choruses as a powerful educational tool, given the role that they played in Athenian life. Those participating in the chorus received training in singing and dancing, and so in physical grace and co-ordination. However, the educational role of the chorus goes beyond this. Lyric poetry represents the communally agreed response to a set of events: the hymnaeal chorus, for example, formed as significant an element in the Greek experience of a wedding as did the nuptial bath or the unveiling of the bride. In fact, the chorus was arguably the most important

⁷ We know little about how choruses were selected, but judging by Antiphon's comments (6.11–13) it seems to have been a delicate matter, fraught with personal politics: cf. also Thuc. 6.56.1, where Hipparchus' expulsion of Harmodius' sister from her role in a procession is considered a major insult. For a discussion of choral recruitment, see Wilson (2000) 75–80.

⁸ Of course it is likely that the same individuals performed in subsequent years (and perhaps in more than one chorus in the same year); nevertheless, the opportunities for choral performance in Athens were clearly vast. For the numbers involved in different choral performances, see Pickard-Cambridge (1988) 234–6; Csapo and Slater (1994) 103–38.

part of the ceremony in public terms, since it took place during the procession when the bride and groom were on display to the whole community. Similarly, the references to banning hired mourners in sumptuary legislation suggest that choral song was among the most publicly visible aspects of funeral ritual. In addition, lyric poetry often includes its didactic message more overtly by incorporating moralizing *gnōmai* or telling a myth which illustrates the morality inherent in the occasion. Thus, for example, Pindar's *epinikia* frequently include explicit moralizing advice to his patrons on subjects ranging from good governance to the limitations of mortality, while the role of the *thrēnos* appears to have been to praise the dead, and so remind the listeners of the deeds and qualities they too should aspire to, and to console the bereaved by means of general reflections on the human condition.⁹ When Plato describes choral songs as 'charms for the soul' (ἐπωδαὶ ταῖς ψυχαῖς) and emphasizes their role in teaching established social principles to the young (*Laws* 659d–e), he is reacting to a truth about how choral performance was perceived. While Plato's views on how the state should deploy its choruses may be derived from his own philosophical stance, his underlying awareness of the importance of choral performance is not contentious philosophy but simply a fact about Greek life.

LYRIC POETRY IN ATHENS

The role of the chorus in Athenian life is not in doubt. In order to discuss tragedy's use of lyric allusions, however, we need to establish not only choral performance in Athens but also knowledge of particular lyric genres. The ease with which this can be done varies between genres, and a detailed discussion of the Athenian reception of specific genres is best left for the relevant chapters. For example, *hymenaios* and *paian* seem unproblematic cases: weddings in Athens involved singing, while *paianes* were certainly performed in Athens, even if they were less important than in some cities.¹⁰ *Epinikion*, on the other

⁹ See Harvey (1955) 169; Alexiou (1974) 102–8.

¹⁰ See Rutherford (2001a) 32–3.

hand, seems to have lost popularity throughout Greece by the mid-fifth century, and even in its heyday there are few examples of odes for Athenian victors. Similarly, while we know of *partheneia* performed in Sparta and Thebes, we have no evidence for Athenian girls taking part in choral performances in the same way, while *thrēnoi* were subject to funerary legislation in Athens as in a number of other *poleis*.

Even for genres which we believe to have been performed in Athens, however, the case is not entirely clear-cut, for familiarity with the genre in general terms need not equate to knowledge of famous literary pieces. For example, it seems likely that any Athenian would have attended a wedding and heard the performance of a piece of *hymenaios*. However, we may have less reason to feel confident that the average Athenian would have heard Sappho's *hymenaios*; and even if he had done so, it might have been as part of his poetic education rather than as contemporary ritual. Since Sappho is regularly depicted on vases and in Middle Comedy, it seems likely that Athenians knew her as a famous figure, but ordinary Athenians could have known who Sappho was without claiming detailed familiarity with her works. Similarly, while the Athenians might commission *paianes* for state performance, it does not follow that they would be familiar with Pindar's *paianes* for other cities. Even if they were, Pindar's *paianes* are likely to have been more complex and sophisticated than smaller-scale examples of the genre; they were preserved as fine examples of poetry rather than because they held a canonical status in terms of ritual practice. Thus, familiarity with a poet may operate on a range of levels: many people might have known selections from the most famous pieces; fewer would presumably have been familiar with the complete works of Pindar.¹¹

Since surviving lyric poetry usually belongs to the 'high' end of the spectrum, we have little firm evidence for how representative it would have been of the genre as a whole. However, the normative aspect of lyric performance provides us with some assistance. As we have seen, lyric poetry is fundamentally bound by its function, and

¹¹ For the process of selection and canonization during the classical period, see Most (1990); Ford (2003); D'Angour (2006).

even the ‘high’ poetry of Simonides or Pindar is nevertheless rooted in a particular occasion. Poetry of this kind balances its literary and its ritual functions: there is a trade-off between literary experimentation with form or convention and the need for the poem to achieve its purpose in a way which is felt to be suitable.¹² The audience would not regard it as an innovative experiment on generic conventions if a *hymenaios* designed for real-life performance described the bride as ugly and the marriage as cursed, or if a *thrēnos* included a list of complaints about the behaviour of the deceased. Similarly, a *paian* that subverted the genre by presenting Apollo as an arbitrarily baleful force would be felt to bring danger upon the whole community, while an epinician poet who suggested his patron’s victory was achieved ingloriously could not hope to gain much further employment.¹³ It therefore seems likely that certain of the *topoi* of lyric poetry are not just conventional but carry their own normative weight; we can expect that more elaborate forms will still adhere to the same basic framework. Thus, when an Athenian heard a Sapphic *hymenaios*, whether or not he was already familiar with the poem, it would have evoked his own contemporary experience of wedding song, and thus triggered his awareness of the role the wedding chorus played in society.

As we will see, tragedy’s approach to incorporating lyric material focuses on the generic rather than the specific. We rarely find a direct allusion to a famous piece; rather, the tragedians evoke conventional features of lyric genres which do not rely on audience familiarity with a particular repertoire. Tragedy’s use of lyric aims to appeal to the widest possible audience; we are not dealing here with a guessing game for the elite. As long as an Athenian in the audience is familiar

¹² This is not to suggest that ritual is incapable of creativity or change, but rather that, because of its social role, the pressures placed upon it are to construct a relationship with past practice rather than to innovate. For the creative potential of ritual, see Kowalzig (2007) 34–5.

¹³ Note, for example, how in Pind. *Pa.* 6 S–M (D6 R) Apollo’s killing of Neoptolemus is justified as divine punishment for Neoptolemus’ crime in killing Priam at the altar (112–17). The gods’ destructive aspect is thus explained as a way of upholding the moral order, and so fundamentally just.

with the core features of a lyric genre (gleaned from whatever knowledge of the *corpus* he happens to possess), he is in a position to recognize that the genre is being evoked and to connect his own assumptions about this form of poetry with what he sees on-stage. The sheer volume of such references in tragedy suggests a high level of familiarity with lyric material. Moreover, such knowledge is made more explicit in comedy, since Aristophanes frequently uses it as a source of parody.¹⁴ Thus, for example, the scene between Peisthetærus and the Poet in *Birds* parodies Pindaric *epinikia* (905–53), the Spartan song at the end of *Lysistrata* closely evokes *partheneia* (1302–20), while *Peace* and *Birds* each end with a *hymenaios* which draws on ritual motifs (*Peace* 1332–59, *Birds* 1720–65).¹⁵ For these scenes to be comically effective, the audience must recognize that a parody is taking place and so be familiar enough with the original genre to appreciate the joke. Moreover, these parodies often draw on subtle details in language and style to evoke the mood of the original genre. Thus, the Poet scene in *Birds* alludes to specific Pindaric pieces (926–7, for example, are a quotation from Pindar fr. 105a S–M), while also relying on the audience's knowledge of the civic role that *epinikia* could play.¹⁶ The *Lysistrata* passage is equally striking, for it echoes what seem to be ritual motifs from Spartan *partheneia*, accessible to us through Alcman's surviving fragments. Since we have no evidence for Athenian parthenaic performance, and in any case Athenian ritual would hardly echo Spartan religious detail, Aristophanes must rely on his audience knowing some *partheneia* as part of their poetic repertoire. Presumably, then, enough of the audience would have responded to this level of detail for it to have been worth including, while some people might have recognized the song as characteristically Spartan even if they were less familiar with the details of the allusion.

¹⁴ For a detailed discussion of Aristophanes' use of lyric see Kugelmeier (1996).

¹⁵ I discuss these passages in more detail in the relevant chapters.

¹⁶ L. P. E. Parker (1997) 328–33 also analyses the metrical composition of the Poet's song as derived from Pindaric style.

ATTITUDES TO ELITE MATERIAL IN ATHENS

The evidence from comedy suggests that a large proportion of the theatre audience were familiar enough with lyric material to recognize and appreciate references and parodies, even of specific pieces. Some of this familiarity need not have been acquired via elite means: for genres which were performed in contemporary Athens, the audience can be expected to have recognized distinctive features regardless of whether or not they were familiar with canonical examples of the genre. For non-Athenian genres, however, we cannot assume that an Athenian would have had experience of ritual performance. Leaving aside live public reperformance, there are various other ways that lyric poetry could have been transmitted.¹⁷ Famous pieces may have been circulated in books or on smaller papyri; they might also have been taught as part of a general musical education.¹⁸ This suggestion is supported by evidence from vase-painting, since vases from the early fifth century frequently depict book-rolls in school scenes, and one vase from c.460 appears to show a boy performing a piece of lyric poetry while a woman tests him against the scroll.¹⁹ Reperformance of certain types of lyric seems to have been standard practice at the symposium, as Aristophanes describes for a Simonides *epinikion* (*Clouds* 1355–6). We know from this passage that not only *epinikia* but fragments of tragic lyric and iambics were also considered suitable for reperformance: it therefore seems likely that a sympotic repertoire could consist of any piece of poetry which the performer knew and felt it appropriate to share with his *hetairoi*.

Given the lack of evidence for transmission and reperformance of lyric poetry, one can only speculate as to which of these possibilities seems the most plausible. However, all of them raise the same issue: any transmission context other than public performance renders performing or reading lyric poetry an elite activity. This is

¹⁷ For knowledge of lyric poetry in Athens, see Ford (2003) 26–30.

¹⁸ The issue of 5th-cent. literacy and book-culture is an area of much scholarly interest: for thorough discussions see Thomas (1989); Ford (2003); Pébarthe (2006).

¹⁹ The vase is a *kylix* by the Sabouroff Painter (Amsterdam 8210 = ARV² 838/27); see Immerwahr (1964); Immerwahr (1973) 144 for a discussion of book-rolls in vase-painting.

particularly an issue for genres which were not performed publicly in Athens, such as *epinikia* or *partheneia*.²⁰ However, even for genres such as *hymenaios* which performed a public function, familiarity with high literary examples of the genre would nevertheless have been acquired via a separate route.

Before we can comfortably discuss tragedy's allusions to lyric poetry, we need to address two questions:

1. Would the average audience member have been familiar enough with elite repertoire to recognize allusions to poetry known in Athens primarily through elite means?
2. How far would the elitist aspects of these reperformance methods have added political colouring to poetry known via that medium?

The sheer number of references to lyric poetry in both tragedy and comedy provides an answer to the first question. It seems unlikely that these references were aimed at only the elite minority in the audience. As we shall see, tragedy uses lyric for poetic ends, and it seems unlikely that the tragedians would develop a rich strand of imagery and make it interpretatively significant if these references passed most of the audience by. Comedy's use of lyric is still more clear-cut because it is so explicit: it seems implausible that Aristophanes would make jokes which ostentatiously excluded most of his audience, especially once we consider he is aiming to win first prize.²¹ However, to answer the first question adequately also involves tackling the second. If some types of poetry were circulated by elite means, we need to explore Athenian attitudes to this material, in order to ascertain how aristocratic culture was viewed and what level of familiarity with it most Athenians claimed.

Elite and sympotic culture in the democratic city

Elite cultural material is frequently associated with the symposium, which provided a forum for the dissemination of poetry as well as

²⁰ For awareness of these genres in Athens, see Chs. 4 and 5 below.

²¹ See L. P. E. Parker (1997) 4–5 on the competence of Aristophanes' audience to recognize allusions which are to us obscure.

allowing aristocratic bonding on a more general level. The symposium is rarely presented as neutral; the audience's attitudes to lyric and its associations may have blurred into their feelings about the symposium as an institution, and the culture associated with it. However, the normative values ascribed to sympotic culture are neither as extreme, nor as straightforward, as we might think. Traditional accounts of the symposium stress its elite (and potentially undemocratic) nature.²² It is true that the symposium was an elite institution, and those hostile to the democracy would have come from the aristocratic classes. It is also true that democratic sources often view elite activities with suspicion. However, it is simplistic to view the elite nature of the symposium as automatically in conflict with the values of the democracy. Aristocratic culture and democratic ideology coexisted in the fifth-century *polis*, but the relationship was not simply a polar opposition of two value systems.²³

To interpret democratic attitudes to elite culture, we are best served by investigating sources aimed at the *dēmos*: comedy, and lawcourt speeches. Aristophanes' *Wasps* contains a prolonged account of the social and cultural implications of aristocratic behaviour with particular reference to the symposium (1122–1264). The discussion takes place in the shadow of the *dikastērion* set up in the first half of the play; the symposium is presented as the antithesis of the ideals of democratic power represented by the lawcourts. The idea of a symposium is introduced in response to Philocleon's unintentional acquittal of the dog Labes, which Philocleon himself sees as a betrayal of the democratic values he has espoused throughout the play. Bdelycleon presents the symposium as an alternative to this lifestyle (already hinted in 736–42). Now Philocleon has betrayed his demotic instincts, Bdelycleon is able to introduce him to the 'Cleon-hating' social circles in which he himself moves. The elitist associations of the symposium are brought out in Bdelycleon's description of appropriate sympotic behaviour.²⁴ Bdelycleon insists that his father needs to wear an eastern costume (1135–50), drawing on ideas of oriental decadence but also on the association of Persia with anti-democratic

²² Cf. e.g. Murray (1990); Morris (2000) 182–5.

²³ Cf. Bowie (1997) 3.

²⁴ Cf. Pütz (2007) 85–7.

leanings.²⁵ The correct position for reclining is called ‘athletic’ (*γυμναστικῶς*, 1212). The recommended topics of conversation are also aristocratic ones: athletics, hunting, and participating in a *theōria* (1186–1204).²⁶

At first sight, this presentation of the symposium appears to be a form of ‘othering’ to fit in with democratic ideology: setting apart the group of ‘extremely wealthy’ to unite everyone else in the club of *metrioi* citizens.²⁷ Similarly, in courtroom rhetoric, the aristocratic litigant frequently presents himself as *metrios*, while playing on distrust of the elite.²⁸ However, tempting though this reading might be, it is too simplistic in its analysis of where the audience’s values are assumed to lie. The comedy focuses on mocking Philocleon’s boorishness rather than Bdelycleon’s pretensions, and thus the audience find themselves more aligned with Bdelycleon’s values and aspirations than with a ‘democratic’ view. As the audience laugh at Philocleon’s misunderstanding of sympotic etiquette, they are claiming for themselves a more sophisticated understanding of the aristocratic codes and how to work with them than someone like Philocleon possesses.²⁹ Aristophanes’ flattery of his audience is aimed to appeal to their elitist values, while simultaneously condemning such elitism.³⁰ This irony is brought out by the inclusion of Cleon himself at this imaginary symposium (1220); this reminds the audience that even a demagogic

²⁵ For Persian clothes as luxurious in comedy, see also Aristoph. *Lys.* 229, *Thesm.* 734, *Clouds* 149–51; Kratinos, *Seriphioi* fr. 222 K–A. Miller (1991) 59–81 and Neer (2002) 19–22 discuss archaic vases depicting symposiasts in oriental costume, and the political overtones of such a portrayal.

²⁶ For *theōria* as an excuse for aristocratic expenditure, see Plut. *Nic.* 3.4.

²⁷ The conventional reading of the passage is that Philocleon represents the ordinary Athenian citizen: see Murray (1990) 150; Cooper and Morris (1990) 78, and see Heath (1987a) 32–3 on Aristophanes’ expression of *metrios* ideology. Similarly, MacDowell (1995) 171 suggests that Philocleon’s uncouthness ‘must imply that the symposium was customary only at higher levels of Athenian society’. For a more nuanced reading see Fisher (2000) 356–69.

²⁸ See Ober (1989) 112–18, who cites amongst other speeches Dem. 54. Todd (1990) analyses this interestingly, and discusses various passages which seem to display elite ideals without alienating the peasant.

²⁹ Similarly, as Pütz (2007) 119–20 notes, poor characters in comedy are nevertheless presented as being familiar with sympotic etiquette, while the prevalence of the motif suggests that the audience themselves must be knowledgeable about it.

³⁰ The same motif can be seen at 1427–49, when Philocleon attempts to apply Bdelycleon’s earlier advice on how to get out of trouble by behaving like an aristocrat.

politician is not above participating in desirable elite activities.³¹ Cleon's presence is often felt by scholars to be surprising, yet it surely highlights how normal the Athenians perceived sympotic dining to be.³² Cleon is not an aristocrat but he is an influential figure: as such, an audience member would not be surprised to find him included in a list of sympotic guests, and his presence confirms that symposia were not automatically believed to be anti-democratic.

We find a similar presentation of elite poetic material in *Peace*, when Trygaeus asks the children of his guests to practise their sympotic repertoire (1265–1304). The second boy, the son of Cleonymus, recites Archilochus' Shield Song (fr. 5 W), a well-known piece where the poet inverts heroic *topoi* by prioritizing his life over the loss of his shield in battle. The humour here is derived from the audience's awareness that the song is a famous sympotic piece, set against Trygaeus' assumption that, given the boy's parentage, the theme is rather too close to the mark.³³ Similarly, the first boy, Lamachus' son, has been criticized for singing lines of epic which Trygaeus feels glorify war (1270–93); this again contrasts the conventional nature of the poetry with its on-stage context. Thus we find sympotic poetry set alongside epic and presented to a mass Athenian audience as something they are expected to be familiar with.³⁴

An instructive parallel here is the handling of elite culture in lawcourt speeches.³⁵ Orators go to some lengths to use elite cultural material (for example citing poetry), but simultaneously imply that their use and knowledge of it is in line with the audience's. Thus, they

³¹ Storey (1985) examines the names described as present at the symposium. Philocleon actually attends and argues that Aristophanes does not present the symposium as an oligarchic affair, which again indicates that the symposium need not be politically charged.

³² See MacDowell (1971) on 1220; (1995) 172; Slater (2002) 102; Pütz (2007) 91.

³³ The loss of the shield may be a *topos* of sympotic poetry (cf. Alcaeus fr. 401b; Anacr. fr. 381b; see Campbell (1982) 146; Seidensticker (1978) 5), in which case Trygaeus humorously interprets a common literary motif as literal truth.

³⁴ Bowie (1997) identifies a number of comic passages which use imagery derived from the symposium in order to highlight wider themes; this again relies on the audience's awareness of sympotic practice, as well as a level of commitment to sympotic codes such that they will interpret the imagery as illuminating rather than troubling and elitist.

³⁵ e.g. Ober (1989); Ober and Strauss (1990); Todd (1990).

avoid falling into either of two potential traps: quoting texts which are too obscure and so appearing to be lecturing the audience by showing off their greater cultural knowledge, or not quoting at all and patronizing the audience by treating them as ill-educated.³⁶ The orators frequently make use of this upper-class material, but justify it by means of the ‘everybody knows’ *topos*, then describe it in terms that assume it also forms part of the audience’s cultural heritage. Any potential attack on the elitist thrust of the comments is thus derailed by the implicit flattery of the audience.³⁷ For as Todd points out, these comments include the audience in an assumption of shared cultural values, and the fact that this was a tactic designed to please the jurors allows us to infer something about the aspirations and ideals of Athenians from lower socio-economic groups.³⁸

Turning back to *Wasps*, we find elite culture used in the lawcourt at the trial of Labes the dog. Bdelycleon finishes his speech by arguing Labes ought to be forgiven despite his guilt, on the grounds that he ‘never learned to play the lyre’ (εἰ δ’ ὑφείλετο, / σύγγνωθι καθαρίζειν γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίσταται, 958–9). Playing the lyre is short-hand for upper-class education, and emphasizes the centrality of musical education to elite values. Various commentators have discussed whether this theme is linked to the real-life trial of Laches, but in fact it seems more likely to tie in with court defences in general.³⁹ Analysis of courtroom speeches suggests a rhetorical *topos* of the aristocrat who is convicted though high-born, which suggests an interest in the tension between aristocratic education, with the privilege and power it bestowed, and the supremacy of the jury, supported by the ideology of democracy.⁴⁰

³⁶ e.g. Aeschin. *Against Timarchos* 1.141, where the orator accuses his opponents of treating the jurors as though they had no education by their citation of poetry.

³⁷ This is taken to an extreme at Dem. 21.1, where the orator, in suggesting that his own actions were in line with the social norms, implies that the audience are or could be liturgists: see Dover (1974) 34–5; Ober (1989) 224–6; Wilson (1991) 173.

³⁸ Dover (1974) 41–5 notes a similar phenomenon with the use of the phrase καλὸς κάγαθός.

³⁹ Indeed Sommerstein (1983) on 959 notes that using this *topos* in the case of Laches is inappropriate. For the phrase as a lawcourt defence, cf. MacDowell (1995) 167.

⁴⁰ e.g. [Dem] 59.116–17; Dem 21.182, 19.280–1: see Ober (1989) 265.

What Bdelycleon is arguing in the *Wasps* passage is that only elite education can be guaranteed to assure correct moral conduct and social order. Conversely, we can infer that those lacking such an education cannot really be expected to behave properly, and it is unreasonable to blame them if they do not.⁴¹ The way this is expressed in the play, as a throwaway line rather than something that needs justifying, implies that it is being presented as a standard courtroom defence (like the bringing in of the fatherless puppies), rather than a novel piece of argumentation. This suggests that it is meant to tie in with an argument used by real-life orators. Indeed, the ethos expressed by the ‘convicted though high-born’ *topos* suggests surprise that someone high-born should commit a crime, as though elite status and lawbreaking were considered incompatible.⁴² Again, we see elite culture and education presented as something desirable, rather than suspect.

The portrayal of the symposium in *Clouds* is equally ambiguous. Strepsiades’ decision to give a symposium in honour of Pheidippides is presented as perfectly normal, as is his request that he sing a piece of *epinikion*. Strepsiades himself is not an elitist figure—rather he is characterized as a simple countryman who has no time for the fancy ways of his aristocratic wife. His symposium might include elite material such as *epinikion*, but it also contains a passage of Aeschylean lyric, as well as an iambic passage by Euripides. It is this last passage which Pheidippides chooses, and the contrast drawn is between Euripides and the other two forms of poetry, thus aligning Simonides with the archetypally Athenian Aeschylus. The conflict is therefore between old-fashioned and new-fangled forms of education and entertainment, rather than reflecting a class conflict in

⁴¹ Philocleon takes a democratic line in response to this point at 989 (οὐ δῆτα καθαρίζειν γὰρ οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι, ‘Certainly not! For I do not know how to play the lyre’). His rebuttal implies that good conduct is perfectly possible without such an upbringing and therefore that cultural education should be irrelevant in legal and public matters.

⁴² Conversely, there is evidence for resentment when aristocrats use their status to avoid punishment for antisocial behaviour (cf. *Wasps* 1253–60 where Bdelycleon advises Philocleon how to avoid the consequences of drunken behaviour): see Dover (1974) 38–9.

Athenian society.⁴³ This is made clear by Pheidippides, who objects to his father's choice of poem and more generally to lyre-playing not on the grounds that they are elitist but that they are old-fashioned:

ὁ δ' εὐθέως ἀρχαῖον εἶν' ἔφασκε τὸ καθαρίζων
ᾄδεν τε πίνονθ', ὥσπερ εἰ κάχρυσ γυναικ' ἀλοῦσαν (1357–8)

He immediately replied that playing the lyre and singing while people are drinking is old-fashioned—it's like watching a woman pounding barley.

Specifically, what Pheidippides seems to dislike is the action of lyre-playing itself, and it is this which he likens to an old woman shelling barley. This suggests that the focus of the comparison is the action of plucking the strings; presumably the implication is that the New Music makes the repertoire of the amateur gentleman-citharist seem outdated and simplistic.⁴⁴ His criticisms of Aeschylus are similar: he accuses him of being long-winded and heavy handed (1365–6), while Strepsiades picks up on the theme of generational conflict when he invites his son to perform something more contemporary (λέξον τι τῶν νεωτέρων, 1369). Pheidippides chooses a passage which is not only morally shocking, but also consists of spoken iambics rather than sung lyric (ῥῆσις, 1370), reflecting his earlier comments about performance. We see a similar dynamic reflected in Eupolis fr. 148 K–A, where the speaker criticizes the works of Stesichorus, Alcman, and Simonides for being old-fashioned and suggests Gnesippus as a more modern choice (τὰ Στῆσιχόρου τε καὶ Ἀλκμᾶνος Σιμωνίδου τε / ἀρχαῖον ἀείδεν).⁴⁵

In *Clouds*, the same themes emerge in the debate between Right and Wrong Argument. Wrong attacks Right's portrayal of traditional elite education, likening it to the wearing of grasshopper broaches in the hair, a habit associated with the old aristocracy (984–5). But Wrong Argument is not representing a democratizing school of

⁴³ See Pütz (2007) 76–83.

⁴⁴ Cf. Wilson (2003) 184; (2004) 281–7. Alternatively, Pheidippides may mean that the songs are as simple as the work-songs of women: cf. Dover (1968) on 1358.

⁴⁵ Similarly, Eupolis fr. 398 K–A claims that the poems of Pindar are no longer performed because of 'the poor taste of the masses' (ὑπὸ τῆς τῶν πολλῶν ἀφιλοκαλίας). Nevertheless, this implies that Pindaric poetry was still performed until recently, and that the older members of Eupolis' audience would be familiar with it and lament its passing. See Storey (2003) 178–9 for a discussion of fr. 148.

thought: the education he offers Pheidippides is an alternative to that offered by Right, and both are forms of higher education for a minority of well-off youths.⁴⁶ The education system Right sets out is steeped in aristocratic activities: musical and gymnastic training and homosexual relationships (964–80) (which tend to be associated with the pre-democratic era),⁴⁷ and these activities, along with symposia and *epinikia*, seem to us to carry elitist connotations. The fact that it is not these associations for which they are attacked in the play suggests that setting up a straightforward polarity between elite and non-elite cultural activities does not adequately reflect the tensions in Athenian society echoed in *Clouds*.⁴⁸ Rather, Aristophanes portrays a horizontal conflict within the aristocratic class, which perhaps reflects generational differences.

Aristophanes, then, gives us a complex picture of attitudes towards elite culture. On the one hand, aristocratic values are linked to a set of political ideals which are worrying to the democratic audience, but on the other, we find admiration for the culture associated with these values. Indeed, the symposium features prominently in comedy: many of Aristophanes' plays include scenes of feasting and revelry, and the surviving fragments of other comic poets include many passages describing sympotic activities.⁴⁹ In many cases (for example, *Peace* 560–80, *Lysistrata* 1182–8), the symposium is represented simply as a place of celebration and peace: a strategy which would be made ineffective if we believed that a mass audience would automatically be mistrustful of the institution.⁵⁰ Our sources suggest a continuity of cultural values across the socio-economic spectrum and an aspiration to elite culture by the lower classes, rather than any formation of a 'working-class' counter-culture. Peter Wilson

⁴⁶ See Euben (1997) 135–6 for a discussion of the elite and educational dynamics of *Clouds*.

⁴⁷ See Murray (1993) 213–19; Dover (1968) 64–6.

⁴⁸ A similar type of horizontal conflict within the elite class can be seen in Aristophanes' first play, *Banqueters*, where the *katapugōn* son espouses some elitist values (e.g. parties, perfume), but rejects others (gymnastic training), and has replaced a traditional Homeric education in favour of the jargon of the lawcourts: see fr. 214, 225, 233 K–A.

⁴⁹ For a thorough account of sympotic language in Aristophanes, see Pütz (2007). Olson (2007) 292–8 collects comic fragments which deal with the symposium.

⁵⁰ See Pütz (2007) 1–40 for the symposium representing peace.

notes that in the absence of any active political culture opposed to democracy, anti-democratic feeling expressed itself through musical culture instead, focused around sympotic poetry and the lyre.⁵¹ This may explain the apparent paradox in the way sympotic poetry is presented in Athenian sources. Musical and political values become meshed together and thus we find political attacks expressed as musical ones. Nonetheless, the musical culture is felt to be a shared one: it is the political angle of aristocratic culture, not its elitism *per se*, that is under attack.

This argument is strengthened when we examine the archaeological evidence for the symposium. From the 480s onwards, the overall production of Athenian sympotic ware increases, while its quality declines, suggesting a larger number of people purchasing such pieces, and more routine work for middle-range buyers. Similarly, the element of 'chattiness' in the pots (for example, signing by the potter, or *kalos* inscriptions) decreases in the fifth century, while depictions of the process of potting also die out.⁵² This also implies a widening of the group of pot-buyers in place of an exclusive community with a connoisseur's interest in the artefacts. The comic poet Alexis even tells us that it was possible to hire sympotic paraphernalia (fr. 259 K-A, cited in Athenaeus 4.164f–165a, 6.229b). This suggests a market aimed at those who either could not afford a full set of sympotic ware or did not hold symposia often enough to make it a worthwhile investment (though this could of course post-date the fifth century).

Similarly, the *andrōn*, the space for the symposium, was itself becoming more widely available and excavations in the Piraeus show quite standard houses with *andrōnes*.⁵³ Though the *andrōn* might have been used for entertainment functions other than the symposium, its design with the off-centre door was developed

⁵¹ Wilson (2004). For *apragmosynē* rather than active political disagreement, see Carter (1986) 52–75.

⁵² Lissarague (1999) notes that in named *kalos* inscriptions, the individuals praised are prominent and fashionable young men, and hence the praise is based on shared knowledge within the aristocratic group. Thus the increased number of unnamed *kalos* inscriptions after the late archaic period suggests an extension of the aristocratic process into a more generic and democratic praise of male beauty.

⁵³ See Whitley (2001) 359–63.

specifically for the holding of symposia.⁵⁴ The most extreme result of this tendency was the creation of public *andrōnes* at the end of the fifth century, which indicates demand for sympotic space by a social class with no access to an *andrōn* of their own.⁵⁵ It seems, therefore, that the state took an active interest in widening access to the symposium.⁵⁶

This is further supported by changes to iconography on sympotic vessels, which shift from aristocratic values to more democratic and *polis*-based themes.⁵⁷ Thus, representations of aristocratic activities such as athletics, the symposium, or courting, which had become particularly popular in the late archaic period, dwindle; in particular, displays of sexual activity disappear, as though no longer felt to be appropriate for general display.⁵⁸ Ideologically, the emphasis appears to move from scenes of luxury to ones promoting *sōphrosynē* and civic values. Within the mythological sphere, we find an increased interest in national myth, with a focus on large-scale stirring themes (for example, Amazonomachies or Gigantomachies). Theseus becomes increasingly important as a national hero, and other local heroes are also reinvigorated (Erechtheus, Erichthonius, Oreithyia).⁵⁹ In scenes of real life, there is more focus on *polis*-based themes such as Greeks fighting Persians, stately sacrifice processions, or tyrannicides. Many of the tyrannicide paintings are modelled on the tyrannicide bronzes by Critius and Nesiotes in the agora, which carried obvious democratic connotations.⁶⁰ We find occasional scenes depicting jurors in court, or the *dokimasia* of the cavalry—

⁵⁴ See Hoepfner and Schwandner (1994) 40–1, 327–8. For a general discussion of the role of the *andrōn* see Jameson (1990a) 188–92 and (1990b) 92–113, esp. 99–100.

⁵⁵ Public dining at the *prytaneion* can also be seen as an appropriation of aristocratic dining-ritual by the *polis*: see Luke (1994) 28–9.

⁵⁶ The Old Oligarch's complaint that the *dēmos* ruined athletics and music (1.13) also implies a democratization of these elite activities: see Marr and Rhodes (2008) 80–1.

⁵⁷ Boardman (1989) 216–34. Vickers (1990) argues that red-figure vases in themselves indicate a widening of the sympotic group, since he believes that figured pottery was an imitation of metalware. While I find the details of his argument unconvincing, he is probably right to suggest the existence of precious metal in drinking vessels among the super-elite.

⁵⁸ Stewart (1997) 156–71; Whitley (2001) 363.

⁵⁹ Boardman (1989) 228–9 and figs. 115, 118, 206, 287.

⁶⁰ Neer (2002) 177–81.

both activities run by the democracy.⁶¹ Some images appear to echo the appearance of wall-painting and stoa art: a publicly visible and accessible art-form.⁶² Democratic discourse is clearly felt appropriate within a sympotic context, another suggestion that the associations and values of the symposium within society were changing. Yet this democratization took place within the elitist medium of sympotic ware, indicating an appropriation rather than a rejection of elite culture by the democracy.

This argument can of course be pushed too far; I am not suggesting that the symposium did not continue to carry elitist associations, nor that elite culture could not still be viewed as suspect. It is striking that in precisely the era when the symposium was in fact becoming more widely available, we find increased discussion of its aristocratic connotations (as in *Wasps*). However, we should be cautious of thinking that the association of lyric poetry with elite education and sympotic performance somehow ‘taints’ that poetry in the democratic sphere. One could argue that Aristophanes’ references to particular pieces of sympotic poetry are aimed at a relatively small subsection of his audience, but the presence of such references in comedy also suggests that claiming knowledge of this type of poetry is not elitist, and is not felt to conflict with the generally democratic outlook of comedy.

It is also worth noting that pieces of music will have different social and political connotations in different contexts. For example, a performance of *Land of Hope and Glory* at the Conservative Party Conference would have entirely different political connotations from one at the last night of the Proms. An individual Briton might bristle at the political implications of the tune at the former, but cheer enthusiastically at the latter. Even someone who responded negatively to the song in both contexts might find it more palatable when played at the Commonwealth Games. Similarly, even an Athenian who felt hostility to the symposium and its entertainment might not carry over the connotations when watching a tragedy. And just as the sports-loving Labour voter might regard the political connotations of English patriotic songs as negative in one context but positive in

⁶¹ Neer (2002) 138–49; see also Spivey (1994).

⁶² See Robertson (1992) 133–5.

another, so too an Athenian might have felt changing attitudes towards elite cultural material, depending how and where it was presented. Tragedy is a democratic medium: open to all, as part of a civic festival. Incorporation of lyric material could therefore be understood as part of the same desire for participation in elite culture that we see in attempts to widen access to the symposium.

We can conclude, then, that the average Athenian had a reasonable level of familiarity with elite poetry, and that he would have been glad to claim a higher one. Athenians liked to believe that such poetry was part of a shared culture rather than something exclusive to an educated minority; to suggest that the *dēmos* was familiar with elite cultural material was therefore good politics. Even if this belief represents a cultural ideal rather than objective fact, it would have been hard to sustain if most people did not have some knowledge of the poetry. In addressing the issue of how familiar Athenians were with lyric poetry, we can assume that even for genres which were not performed publicly, Athenians would have known enough to pick up allusions. Moreover, the aspirational nature of musical and cultural ideals means that any elite colouring the poetry acquired would not have greatly influenced the tragic audience's feelings on seeing it evoked in a dramatic context.

TRAGEDY AND DEMOCRACY

This discussion of 'elite' and 'democratic' values raises the further question of tragedy's own relationship to the society that produced it. This is a topic of intense contemporary debate, and a detailed treatment of the issue is beyond the remit of this book.⁶³ However, in order to explore the ramifications of tragedy's use of (non-Athenian) lyric material, it is important to engage briefly with the question of whether tragedy itself is a 'democratic' genre, and whether it can be described as a particularly Athenian one.

⁶³ For a range of viewpoints see e.g. Goldhill (1990); Griffin (1998); (1999); Seaford (2000); Carter (2007); Allan (forthcoming a).

A recent and influential approach is that of Peter Rhodes, who argues that tragedy is not a democratic genre in any meaningful sense.⁶⁴ Rhodes claims that the institutions surrounding tragic performance were not inherently democratic, but rather were standard institutions of the Greek *polis*, influenced by the democracy only in the exact form which they took.⁶⁵ He further observes that the central themes and conflicts of most tragic plays are common to most Greek *poleis* (for example, the potential conflict between *oikos* and *polis*), so that tragedy should be seen as exploring civic ideology in general rather than anything specific to Athens. Rhodes is right to point out the universal nature of many tragic themes, and it is certainly true that most of tragedy's concerns would be of interest to citizens of any *polis* (and indeed to us today). Rhodes nevertheless misses the importance of tragedy's connection to Athens: namely, the Athenian perception of tragedy and of civic values.

The fact that tragedy deals with values shared across many *poleis* is an interesting observation from our perspective as cultural historians, but it does not tell us much about how the Athenians themselves regarded these issues when watching drama. An Athenian audience regarded their civic values as (by definition) Athenian ones; from their perspective the overlap between these values and the values of Thebes or Corinth would be coincidental (or denied). An example of how Athenians appropriated general good qualities as specifically Athenian ones can be seen in Pericles' Funeral Oration (Thuc. 2.35–46), where the qualities for which Athens is praised include such universally admirable characteristics as obedience to the laws (37.3), regular observance of festivals (38.1), and helping friends (40.4). All of these are presented as characteristically Athenian virtues and given in the context of an argument about Athens' exceptionalism. Similarly Pericles claims that the Athenians estimate risks before taking action, and criticizes other Greeks for failing to debate issues thoroughly (40.2–3). So he implies that informed and sober decision-making is a particularly Athenian quality, and one which is implicitly connected with Athens' democratic and

⁶⁴ Rhodes (2003); cf. also Carter (2007) 64–89.

⁶⁵ Indeed, we have evidence for some form of *chorègia* in 5th-cent. Sicily: see Wilson (2007).

participatory system of governance. Yet within Thucydides' own narrative, we can see that this Athenian self-image is not one grounded either in objective reality or in the beliefs of other Greek *poleis*. Thus, the Corinthians in book 1 present Athens as failing to assess risks accurately, and contrast the Athenians' reckless daring with the Spartans' cautious judgement (καὶ παρὰ δύναμιν τολμηταὶ καὶ παρὰ γνώμην κινδυνευταί, 1.70.3). Hence, according to Sparta's allies, careful decision-making is a peculiarly Spartan quality. Similarly, Pericles' claim that Athens' democratic constitution makes her obey the laws and uphold the oppressed (2.37.3) is undermined by the later Athenian claim to the Melians that justice is only possible between those of equal power (5.89). So as Thucydides' narrative makes clear, the qualities on which the Athenians pride themselves are by no means unique to Athens, and indeed can be appropriated by other cities with equal ease. Yet these general characteristics are presented by an Athenian speaker as being intimately connected with Athenian democracy and part of the Athenian self-image.⁶⁶

From an external perspective it is unsurprising that Athenian society faced similar problems to and valued similar ideals as other Greek *poleis*. Similarly, if a modern British play tackled issues that were also relevant to Dutch society it would not be surprising given the cultural and historical similarities between the two countries: it might indeed give a sociologist interesting data on the culture of northern Europe. However, if we are interested in assessing the British audience's reaction to the play's themes, shared similarities with other countries would not be of primary importance. Since this book explores how and why Athenian tragic poets reworked lyric material for an Athenian audience, it is this original audience's attitude to the plays that is of central interest, not the later spread of tragedy to other communities. While it is no doubt true that tragic institutions such as the *chorēgia* tackled issues relevant to any *polis* (in this case the relationship between elite individual and wider group), this does not mean that the *chorēgia* was not perceived by *Athenians* as a fundamentally democratic institution. After all, from a twenty-first century perspective, there is not much difference

⁶⁶ For Athens' self-image, see Mills (1997) ch. 2.

between Athenian democracy and Theban oligarchy: both involved direct governance by a subset of the city's total population and political exclusion of other inhabitants outside the core group; the only difference is that the Athenian political group (of all adult male citizens) is larger than the Theban one (of male citizens within a certain wealth-class).⁶⁷ From an ancient perspective, however, the differences between democratic and oligarchic rule were much more important than the continuities, and Athenians perceived their government as wholly different from an oligarchy.⁶⁸ Thus, while Rhodes is right that there is a logical distinction between 'democratic' and 'civic' ideology, I would respond that an Athenian audience would not have kept that distinction clear. To an Athenian, civic values meant the values of their own city, and democracy was one of the values on which Athenians prided themselves.⁶⁹

Because of the strong association between Athens and democracy, tragedy's self-consciously Athenian status becomes relevant in addressing this issue. During the fifth century, tragedy was a resolutely Athenian genre, dominated by Athenian poets.⁷⁰ Moreover, tragedy's special relationship with Athens is clear from the fact that surviving plays systematically present Athens as different to other *poleis*: it is never the location for catastrophic events, and is frequently presented as a place which can provide salvation and resolution for fallen heroes from other states (Aesch. *Eum.*; Soph. *OC*; Eur. *El.*, *Or.*), and which fights for the rights of the weak and oppressed (Soph. *OC*; Eur. *Hcl.*, *Suppl.*). Athenian kings tend to be wise and socially minded, rather than the flawed and egotistical rulers we see depicted

⁶⁷ For Theban rules about political inclusion, see Arist. *Pol.* 3.1278^a21–6, 6.1321^a26–31.

⁶⁸ Athens is of course not the only democratic *polis*: see Hansen and Nielsen (2004) 1338–41. However, again we must distinguish between Athenian self-presentation and objective reality: Athens regarded itself as the founder of democracy, and hence regarded democracy as an Athenian invention; cf. the presentation of Athenian kings in tragedy as proto-democratic. See Mills (1997) for a thorough treatment of this issue.

⁶⁹ Carter (2007) 40–2 suggests that tragedy aims to play to an international audience; this is no doubt the case, but it does not follow that the audience did not perceive it as presenting Athenian values and an Athenian prestige-product to this wider audience.

⁷⁰ Out of the 49 5th-cent. tragedians listed in *TrGF* i., 42 are Athenian.

elsewhere (cf. Soph. *OC*; Eur. *Hclld.*); when they do behave less than perfectly, they do so when they are temporarily away from Athens, thus distancing them from the city.⁷¹ Athens sometimes features in non-Athenian plays as an idealized location which contrasts with the horrific events of the play: for example, the Chorus's statement in *Trojan Women* that they would rather be slaves in Athens than anywhere else (208–9). Fifth-century tragedy, then, seems acutely aware of its Athenian status. There is less of a gap between heroic and contemporary worlds in the presentation of Athens, as the city's positive qualities mirror the audience's self-perception. It is also striking (though often overlooked) that the majority of plays with an obviously pro-Athenian message are among the alphabetical plays of Euripides: in particular *Heracles*, *Children of Heracles*, *Suppliant Women*, *Ion*. What this means is that four of the eight tragedies which survive by chance deal with Athenian themes (or in the case of *Heracles* alter the myth to affirm the saving power of Athens).⁷² Given that this set of plays is the closest we can come to a random sample of fifth-century tragedy, we should take the prevalence of Athenian themes seriously.⁷³ The process by which the other surviving plays were selected is obscure to us, but since it took place outside the context of fifth-century Athens, the degree to which the play was felt to be parochial or patriotic was perhaps a relevant factor.

⁷¹ Cf. Hall (1997) 100–3. Neither Aegeus nor Theseus is an unsympathetic character, but neither is the perfect Athenian king we find elsewhere. Some scholars have argued that Aegeus is depicted as foolish (cf. Buttrey (1958) 11; Dunkle (1969) 105): whether or not one agrees with this, he is certainly manipulated by Medea into being an accessory in the children's murder, and his role in the play is therefore a perversion of the usual Athenian saviour. Theseus on the other hand is over-hasty and quick to condemn his son unfairly; his flaws are therefore as integral to the play's disastrous outcome as those of Hippolytus or Phaedra.

⁷² One could also arguably add *IT* to this list, since it foreshadows Iphigeneia's participation in an Athenian cult and hence Athens' power to reach a more positive relationship with Artemis.

⁷³ We know of other plays with an overtly Athenian theme: e.g. Aesch. *Eleusinioi*; Soph. *Aegeus*, *Creousa* (or *Ion*), *Theseus*; Eur. *Aegeus*, *Erechtheus*, *Theseus*. In dealing with fragmentary or lost plays, it is important to bear in mind that Athenian patriotic elements may not be evident from the title or hypothesis alone: the surviving hypothesis to *Ion*, for example, mentions Creousa's Erechtheid birth but we would not be able to infer the importance of the Athenian theme from it.

In discussing tragedy, then, I see it as important to recognize the specifically Athenian factors which shaped its development. Moreover, tragedy, like other Athenian sources, represents Athens as embodying particular civic values (such as generosity, equality, piety); whether or not these values were in fact shared with other *poleis*, they are depicted to the Athenian audience as specifically Athenian, and presumably the audience regarded them as such. In this sense, therefore, I would maintain that tragedy is a 'democratic' or an 'Athenian' genre, and will draw on this premiss in my discussion of particular plays and passages.

This chapter has aimed to set the scene for an Athenian reading of lyric and ritual poetry, and to explore the contextual factors which governed how a fifth-century Athenian audience would respond to lyric allusions in the context of a tragedy. The importance that choral performance held in Athenian life made it a powerful mechanism through which to transmit ideas. The audience recognized the chorus as a medium in which normative values were embedded, and would additionally have recognized the individual genres which codified attitudes to particular circumstances. Despite the fact that famous lyric pieces would have been circulated by elite means, Athenian audiences would have been familiar enough with the broad patterns of many of these genres to nevertheless perceive them as part of their own ritual experience; while in any case, as we have seen, Athenian ideology tended to claim elite poetry as part of a cultural heritage shared by the *dēmos* as a whole. For the original theatre-audience, then, lyric allusions in tragedy would have been a vivid experience. Nevertheless, we must set against this choro-centric picture the roles which different genres played in particular communities. For certain genres will have carried associations alien to an Athenian context: for example, the non-Athenian custom of parthenaic song, the elitist associations of *epinikion*, the Athenian rejection of *thrēnos*. As we shall see, the conflict between Panhellenic and *polis*-specific ritual associations gave the poets a further seam to explore, for the aristocratic or old-fashioned associations of *epinikion* or *thrēnos* could be set against contemporary values to which the play anachronistically alludes. Now that this methodological and contextual groundwork has been established, it is time to examine genres and plays in more detail, and to explore how generic interaction works in practice.

3

Paian

The *paian* provides a good place to begin our exploration for several reasons. Firstly, it is one of the genres most commonly referenced in tragedy, and so provides a variety of examples and case studies. Secondly, it is often easier to spot an allusion to the *paian* than to other genres, for such allusions frequently contain a *paian*-refrain which allows us to be certain that a reference to the genre is intended. Unlike *epinikia* or *partheneia*, where we have to carefully assemble a case based around imagery, diction, and context, a *paian*-refrain provides an assurance of generic interaction which is hard for even a sceptic to doubt. Finally, our understanding of the *paian* has benefited from the substantial recent scholarship on the genre, which puts us in a better position to explore the meanings that the *paian* can have in tragedy, and the range of ways that the tragedians deploy it.

THE GENRE

The *paian* as a genre is attested throughout Greek literature, and its regular naming in sources, its association with Apollo, and its distinctive ‘tag’ might lead us to assume that defining it would be straightforward. In fact, however, classifying what constitutes a *paian* is a complex task, for *paianes* vary considerably both in formal features and in performance contexts. For this reason the *paian* became a particular victim of the methodological difficulties discussed in Chapter 1: Hellenistic scholars, seeking conceptually

distinct categories and neat boundaries, argued over the distinctions between *paianes* and other genres, and were often unable to agree on the attribution of particular songs to categories.¹ This disagreement in the ancient sources has made it difficult for modern scholars to approach the *paian*, and has raised concerns as to whether the term really represents a conceptually distinct genre.² Fortunately, modern approaches to genre-theory have lessened the difficulties of dealing with borderline cases or conflicting evidence, and we need no longer regard these as insurmountable obstacles. Moreover, in recent years the *paian* has been the subject of a great deal of scholarly attention.³ While disagreements still remain, much of the work of identifying common features and performance functions has already been done, and so this section can be relatively brief.

In their analyses of the *paian*, both Käppel and Rutherford stress the importance of performance function, which, as we have seen, is of central importance for understanding Greek genres more generally.⁴ At first sight the picture is far from straightforward, for performance of the *paian* is attested at a range of occasions and for a variety of purposes. *Paianes* were performed in times of trouble and in times of celebration, and at both public and private functions. While the genre is usually associated with Apollo, we also find examples of non-Apolline *paianes*, and indeed of performances in contexts which are not explicitly religious: for example weddings and symposia.⁵

¹ See Proclus, *Chrest. ap. Phot. Bibl.* 320a21–5 on the conflation of *paianes* and *prosodia*. For disputes about the categorization of particular pieces cf. e.g. *POxy* 2368 (a disagreement between Callimachus and Aristarchus as to whether a poem counts as a *paian* or a *dithyrambos*); [Plut.] *de Mus.* 1134c (on whether Xenodamus of Cythera composed *paianes* or *hyporchemata*), 1134e (on whether Xenocritus of Locri composed *paianes* or *dithyramboi*); *Ath.* 15.696a, b (on whether Aristotle's song for Hermias (*PMG* 842) is a *paian* or a *skolion*).

² Cf. e.g. Harvey (1955): 'If even in those days people could not always tell a paean when they saw one, we cannot expect to discover a more reliable criterion ourselves.'

³ For recent discussions of the *paian*, see Käppel (1992); Schröder (1999); Rutherford (2001a); Furley and Bremer (2001) 84–91; Ford (2006). This sudden rush of interest in the *paian* represents the first serious study of the genre since Fairbanks (1900).

⁴ Käppel (1992) 17–21; Rutherford (2001a) 4–8. For a list of performance contexts, see Käppel 43–65; Rutherford 18–58.

⁵ For *paianes* at weddings, cf. *Sapph. fr.* 44.31–3 V; *Aesch. TrGF* iii. 350; *Aristoph. Birds* 1763–5, *Thesm.* 1034–6 = *Eur. TrGF* 122. For *paianes* at the symposium cf. e.g.

Nevertheless, upon analysis the *paian* falls into two broad roles. Firstly, it can fulfil a 'negative' function, and ward off some kind of evil. *Paianes* sung to protect against plague or in response to natural disaster fall into this category. Secondly, it can have a 'positive' function of celebration. This category includes victory *paianes*, as well as those sung at other celebrations (for example, weddings). Both roles date back as far as our earliest sources: in the *Iliad* the Achaeans sing a *paian* both to ward off the plague (1.472–4) and to celebrate Achilles' killing of Hector (22.391–2).⁶ The two categories need not be mutually exclusive, and *paianes* can be ambiguously placed between the two functions, or share in both.⁷ Though opposite, these two categories are conceptually linked: the first consists of prayer for divine favour, while the second represents the thanks offered when such favour is received. At the heart of the *paian*, therefore, lies a kind of paradox, for the genre hovers between triumph and disaster, anxiety and jubilation, expressing man's dependence on the gods and his hopes and fears regarding their beneficence.

As Rutherford also notes, a central feature of the *paian* is the creation of a sense of community and solidarity.⁸ In public *paianes*, the chorus not only represents the *polis* as a whole but often symbolizes a communal response to a potential disaster which could affect the group. Thus, as well as opening the way to communication with the god, the *paian* represents the community's response to the crisis they face or to their salvation. Similarly, military *paianes* signify the unity of the army, whether to boost morale before battle or to celebrate victory afterwards. When choruses from different Greek cities each perform a *paian* at a Panhellenic sanctuary, the singing of

Alcm. fr. 98 *PMGF*; Pherecrates fr. 138.5 K–A; Dicaearchus fr. 88 Wehrli; Plut. *Sump. Probl.* 615b.

⁶ Early scholarship on the *paian* is often marred by a desire to isolate one function as the 'true' or original one, and to explain how the other functions derive from it: cf. Fairbanks (1900), who takes the aversion of illness to be the original function.

⁷ Rutherford (2001a) 7 on 'positive' and 'negative' *paianes*. He conceptualizes intermediate or ambiguous *paianes* as being a third category which incorporates elements from both the other functions (e.g. a *paian* sung before battle, which both affirms the army's solidarity and tries to avert defeat in battle).

⁸ Rutherford (2001a) 9, 61–3.

the *paian* affirms the unity of the local group who represent their own *polis* and its relationship with the god. Thus, for example, Pindar's *Paian* 5 S–M (D5 R), composed for the Athenians to perform at Delos, tells of Attic settlers moving first to Euboea (*Εὐβοίαν ἔλουν καὶ ἔνασσαν*, 35–6) and later to Delos, where they were granted possession of the island by Apollo himself (*ἔρικυδέα τ' ἔσχον / Δῆλον, ἐπεὶ σφιν Ἀπόλλων / δῶκεν ὁ χρυσοκόμας / Ἀστερίας δέμας οἰκεῖν*, 39–42). In private settings, the *paian* is usually performed on occasions which call for some form of group-bonding; thus, the *paian* at the symposium can be understood as one of the range of strategies for bonding the *hetaireia*, while at the wedding it serves to unite the guests in their celebration of the joining of two families.

The *paian* was performed by men: a feature linked to its corporate nature, for a chorus of young males can easily be felt to represent the *polis* as a whole. The association between the *paian* and male performance is often expressed by linking and contrasting it with its female equivalent: the *ololugē*.⁹ Within tragedy, on the other hand, we find the *paian* frequently associated with females (both characters and choruses), and Rutherford therefore suggests that these would have been perceived as deliberate inversions of the norms of the genre.¹⁰ However, the tone and context of these references rarely suggests that we should problematize the performers' gender. Indeed, we even find occasional references to female performers outside the tragic world: one of the folk etymologies for the genre's name derives it from the cry raised by Leto or a group of local nymphs which encourages Apollo to kill the Delphic dragon.¹¹ A female chorus is said to have performed the *paian* at Delos: a tradition first mentioned in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, again in the context of an aetiology (*κούραι Δηλιάδες Ἐκατηβελέταο θεράπναι*, *HHAp.* 157). The Deliades seem to have been well enough known for Euripides to mention them in a context where he wishes to evoke a standard form of praise for

⁹ e.g. Sapph. fr. 44.31–3 V; Bacchyl. 17.124–9; Xen. *An.* 4.3.19; see Deubner (1941); Pulleyn (1997a) 178–83.

¹⁰ Rutherford (2001a) 59. See also Ford (2006) 285.

¹¹ Duris *Σαμίων ὄροι* (*FGrHist* 76 F 79); Clearchus of Soli, *περὶ παροιμιῶν* A fr. 64 Wehrli = Ath. 15.701d; Apoll. Rhod. 2.701–13.

Apollo (παιᾶνα μὲν Δηλιάδες / <ναῶν> ὕμνουσ', Eur. *Her.* 687–8). Euripides' Chorus mention the Deliades in order to compare their praise of Heracles to a form of religious praise, the *paian* for Apollo at Delphi; the comparison mirrors the similar connection they make at the start of the same ode between the changing emotional tone of their song and Apollo's alternation of *paianes* and laments (αἴλινον μὲν ἐπ' εὐτυχεῖ / μολπαῖ Φοῖβος ἰαχεῖ, 348–9). There is no suggestion that the gender of the Deliades should be relevant to interpreting the image. Similarly, the Chorus of *Trachiniae* envisage a chorus of men and a chorus of girls singing songs to welcome Heracles, but it is the girls whose song is called a *paian* (ὁμοῦ δὲ παιᾶνα παι-/ᾶν' ἀνάγειτ', ὦ παρθένοι, 210–11): again the tone of the ode is joyful and there is no suggestion that the gender of the singers should be viewed as problematic.¹² While female performance of the *paian* might not have been a feature of the genre's real-life enactment, it seems to have a life in myth and poetry. We should therefore understand the *paian* of tragedy as freed from the gender constraints of the real world.

The *paian* was also a choral genre, and again Rutherford suggests that solo performance would have been felt to be transgressive, basing his analysis of the *paian* in Euripides' *Ion* on this supposition (see below for discussion of this passage).¹³ However, again in tragedy we find reference to solo performers, such as Iphigeneia's performance of the *paian* at her father's symposia (εὐποτμον παι-/ῶνα φίλως ἐτίμα, Aesch. *Ag.* 246–7). It would be reasonable to interpret Iphigeneia's performance as transgressive on the grounds that a well-born girl should not be on display in front of unrelated males. However, the fact that her performance is a solo one does not seem relevant: indeed, if anything the passage indicates that the audience would have recognized the concept of a solo *paian* performance in such a context. We know of other choral genres such as *epinikion* being re-performed by soloists in a sympotic context; it would not be implausible to suppose that *paianes* could have been performed in this manner, even if it were not the usual practice.

¹² Other examples of female *paianes* are Aesch. *Ag.* 242–7 (discussed in the following paragraph), *Cho.* 151; Eur. *IA* 1468.

¹³ Rutherford (2001a) 59, 111–12.

Indeed, Strabo believes there to have been citharodic *paian* competitions at Delphi in ancient times (9.3.10), which suggests that the concept of *paianes* performed by soloists cannot have been perceived as automatically subversive of the genre.

As to formal features, the picture is less clear, since surviving archaic and classical *paianes* are few and fragmentary. They also tend to belong to one particular type: literary cult-songs for Apollo. In addition, the fact that a single poet (Pindar) dominates the repertoire of fifth-century *paianes* to which we have access may skew our understanding of the genre. Indeed, the usefulness of formal features in defining the *paian* has been a subject of contention among scholars working on the genre, beginning with Harvey's exasperated observation that 'there seem . . . to have been practically no rules at all'.¹⁴ Similarly, Käppel rejects formal features as a useful tool for categorizing the genre, believing them to take a subordinate role or no role at all.¹⁵ Conversely, Schröder's account, supported by D'Alessio, places a greater emphasis on formal features and seeks to explain away apparent inconsistencies in how these features are deployed.¹⁶

While it is indeed difficult to isolate features which make something identifiable as a *paian*, there are general conclusions that we can draw. One particular paeanic feature is the use of a refrain.¹⁷ This is often built on the ritual paean-cry *ἦ παῖάν* (and variants), but some refrains contain no direct address to Paian, such as *ἦγε Δάλι' Ἀπολλων* at the start of each stanza of Pindar, *Paian* 5 S–M (D5 R). We also find what Rutherford terms 'quasi-refrains': refrain-like tags which are not in fact repeated. For classifying a song as a *paian*, the refrain is not a watertight solution, for there are *paianes* without refrains and the refrain can appear simply as an allusion in songs

¹⁴ Harvey (1955) 173.

¹⁵ Käppel (1992) 35.

¹⁶ Schröder (1999), reviewed by D'Alessio in *BMCR* 2000.01.24.

¹⁷ For refrains as a feature of the *paian* see Rutherford (2001a) 68–72. Käppel (1992) 66–7 gives a list of paean-refrains. Ford (2006) sees the refrain as an essential part of the *paian's* function. For an ancient discussion of the link between refrain and *paian* see Athenaeus 696b–e. For the refrain elsewhere in Greek literature see Moritz (1979).

which are not themselves *paianes* (as happens frequently in tragic odes).¹⁸ Nevertheless, as we have seen, watertight criteria are not the goal. The refrain can count as an identifying feature without imposing the further restriction that it needs to be a necessary or sufficient condition, which would be an excessively formalist approach.¹⁹ The distinctive nature of the refrain makes it particularly useful for our purposes, for it makes allusion to the *paian* a very straightforward matter. Simply by incorporating the refrain, the tragedian can alert his audience to the idea that the *paian* is relevant, and can also encourage them to interpret more subtle formal features through the norms of paeanic song.

Beyond the refrain, the features of the *paian* tend not to be distinctively paeanic: that is, they are not exclusive to *paianes*, nor are they necessarily a feature of every *paian*. These formal features are best understood as possible characteristics; their presence in a tragic allusion may confirm that the passage is meant to be paeanic, but taken alone they are not usually enough to enable us to identify something as a *paian*. Thematically, *paianes* commonly contain some kind of religious narrative, often telling a story about Apollo (or sometimes another god), or giving the aetiology of a cult.²⁰ The morality of the *paian* is, as one would expect, in line with the conventions of religious song more generally, often stressing the justice of the gods, and their role as arbiters of the moral order. For example, in *Paian* 6 S–M (D6 R), Apollo punishes Neoptolemus for the impiety of his murder of Priam at Zeus' altar, and for challenging Apollo's own authority at his sanctuary. Conversely, the epinician treatment of Neoptolemus in *Nemean* 7 stresses his positive achievements and

¹⁸ Ariphron's *paian* to Health (813 *PMG*) and Pindar, *Pa.* 6 S–M (D6 R) lack refrains, and as such Käppel (1992) and Rutherford (2001a) suggest that it need not be a defining feature. Käppel also finds the range of refrain-types problematic in isolating it as a formal feature (p. 68). For a counter-view, Schröder (1999) 50–61.

¹⁹ Cf. Ford (2006) 286–9.

²⁰ For aretology of a deity, Pind. *Pa.* 9, 7b, 12 S–M (A1, C2, G1 R); Sim. *PMG* 519, fr. 32; Isyllus, *paian* 41–57; Limen. *paian*; Ath. *paian*; Philod. *paian* 14–62. For aetiology of a cult, Pind. *Pa.* 6, 8 S–M (D6, B2 R)), fr. 54, 140a S–M (G8, H1 R); Bacchyl. fr. 4; Philod. *paian* 105–43. See Rutherford (2001a) 73–5. For aetiology and *paian* see Schmidt (1990).

his future status in hero cult.²¹ In *Paian* 8a S–M (B3 R), the fall of Troy is related to Paris' sin in abducting Helen and to the prophecy which warned Hecuba of the destruction her baby would bring about.²² In *Paian* 4 S–M (D4 R), Euxantius describes how the gods' punishment of the arrogant and impious makes him afraid to accept earthly power, a sentiment explicitly commended by the poet. Divine morality and punishment may not be the most important theme of these songs but we find it as a subtext, and the role of the gods as moral arbiters frequently seems to be an underlying assumption.

On style, it is still harder to generalize.²³ However, we can note that the style of the *paian* seems to be infected by its religious nature. In particular, surviving *paianes* place emphasis on ritually correct language. One striking feature is the frequent use of words meaning 'bright' or 'shining' (for example ἀγλαός and compounds).²⁴ This imagery serves several purposes. At a banal level, things that are noteworthy or precious are often picked out in Greek poetry by being described as shining. Brightness is in the category of positive words which were religiously appropriate in this context. However, light imagery in the *paian* has a more symbolic purpose. 'Light' is often used figuratively to mean 'safety', 'victory', or of a person, 'saviour'.²⁵ In religious terms this fits well with the delivering function of the *paian*, and it is a short step from 'safety' to 'healing'. Ἀγλαός was an epithet of Asclepius, another healing deity and

²¹ This is not to suggest that the gods in *epinikion* are not also presented as just: rather, that *epinikion* tends to present mortal heroes in a positive light. See Ch. 4 for further discussion.

²² A scholion on the song (*Π*²⁶ fr. 29.9) suggests that it compared Menelaus' and Paris' visits to consult the oracle at Delphi, contrasting Menelaus' honest motivations with Paris' intent to abduct his wife, which would make the moralizing tone more explicit: see Rutherford (2001a) 234–5.

²³ See Käppel (1992) 74–5 on the difficulties of identifying stylistic features.

²⁴ For ἀγλαο- words in *paianes*, Pind. *Pa.* 12.15, 3.1, 3.5, 7c(a).2 S–M (G1.15, D3.1, D3.5, E1.2 R); Simon. *PMG* 519 fr. 120(b), 6. ἀγλα is found as the name of a daughter of Asclepius in the Erythraean *paian* to Asklepios, 13; and as the mother of Asclepius at Isyllus, *paian*, 46. See Rutherford (2001a) 76; Haldane (1963).

²⁵ e.g. Hom. *Il.* 6.6; 8.282; 15.74; 16.39, 95; 17.615; 21.538; *Od.* 16.23; Aesch. *Pers.* 300; Soph. *Ant.* 600; *Aj.* 709. See LSJ s.v. φάος.

recipient of *paianes*, who is linked to Apollo.²⁶ Aiglē is commonly given as the name of a daughter of Asclepius, which confirms the link between health and light.²⁷ Thus using imagery of light and brightness is connected with the purpose and function of the *paian*.

We are therefore able to build up a workable picture of some features a tragedian might draw on in alluding to the *paian*. Features such as religiously correct language or light imagery would not in themselves be enough to suggest a *paian*-allusion; however, when in the context of a *paian*-tag or a functional similarity, these other features help to give the allusion strength, and to confirm for the audience that the association they are making is the correct one. It remains for us to ascertain whether an Athenian tragic audience would be in a position to notice such allusions. The performance of *paianes* in Athens seems to have been less central to religious life than in other *poleis*, probably because of the dominance of tragedy and *dithyrambos* in the major state religious festivals. Nevertheless, we know of enough evidence for paeanic performances to be confident that an Athenian audience would have been familiar with the genre's role and performance function.²⁸ We know of *paianes* composed by the Athenian poet Phrynichus, and by Sophocles; we are also told that Sophocles was involved in the performance of a *paian* after the victory at Salamis, which suggests that victory *paianes* were common practice.²⁹ It also seems likely that *paianes* were among the

²⁶ Hesychius (1. 25, 70) gives *Ἀγλαόπης* and *Αἰγλαήρ* as epithets of Asclepius, and *Αἰγλήτης* as an epithet of Apollo (cf. Apoll. Rhod. 4.1716). See Bekker, *Anecd. Gr.* 354.15; *Suda* αἰ 64 = ii.160.9 Adler; Paus. Attic. 95 (ed. Schwabe).

²⁷ According to Isyllus (*paian* 46), Asclepius was the son of Aiglē and Apollo, but according to Hermippus (schol. Ar. *Wealth* 701), she was his daughter, and the latter is the more common version. She features in a painting of Asclepius and his daughters which Pliny mentions (*NH* 35.137). Aelius Aristides Rhet. (*Ἀσκληπιάδαι* 22 Keil) discusses the significance of her inclusion, and comments *ὑμῶν τε αὐτῶν καὶ ἀδελφῶν, οἷς Ἰασώ τε καὶ Πανάκεια καὶ Αἰγλή σύνεστι καὶ Ὑγίεια, ἡ πάντων ἀντίρροπος, Ἡπιόνης δὲ παῖδες ἐπώνυμοι*. Thraemer in Pauly-Wissowa 2.1657 comments on the link between brightness and health. See Pearson (1911); Haldane (1963) 55–6.

²⁸ For Athenian *paianes* see Rutherford (2001a) 32–3.

²⁹ For the Salamis *paian*, see *Vita Soph.* 3 (*TrGF* iv. 31); for Phrynichus, see *Ath.* 6.250b = *TrGF* i. 3. We know from the *Suda* (Σ 815 = iv. 401.24 Adler) that Sophocles wrote a number of *paianes*, and a fragment of one (*PMG* 737) is preserved on an

performances by men and boys in honour of Apollo at the Thargelia.³⁰

In addition, Athenian choruses performed *paianes* on pilgrimages to Panhellenic sanctuaries (for example, Pindar's *Paian* 5 S–M (D5 R) is composed for an Athenian performance at Delos), and these would have increased the status and prominence of the genre.³¹ The *paian* forms a regular enough part of Athenian life, then, for us to expect a reasonable level of familiarity with the genre. And indeed, the frequent occurrence of the word *παῖάν* (and derivations) in tragedy, whether as a direct reference to the genre or as a figure of speech for healing and safety, suggests that the *paian* and its connotations were well established in the minds of Athenian audiences.³² In short, the regular allusions to *paianes* and use of the *paian*-refrain in Attic drama provide strong evidence that an Athenian audience would understand and respond to such references.

PAIAN IN TRAGEDY

The *paian* is one of the lyric genres most commonly alluded to in tragedy, and is frequently referred to by name. As I have already suggested, the distinctive nature of the *paian*-refrain makes *paian*-allusions particularly effective, for it is both an economic and a forceful way to evoke the genre. The frequency of *paian*-allusions

inscription found in the *agora*. For a detailed account of the monument, see Oliver (1936).

³⁰ For Apolline performances at the Thargelia see Rutherford (2001a) 33, who follows the original suggestion by Bodensteiner (1891) 48; Wilson (2000) 314 n. 22, 322 n. 115; Parker (2005) 182.

³¹ A surviving example of an Athenian *paian* at Delphi may be Simon. *PMG* 519 fr. 35(i); see Rutherford (1990) 172–6. For Athenian *theōriai* to Delphi and Delos, cf. Pl. *Phaed.* 58a–c; Thuc. 3.104; Plut. *Thes.* 23.1, *Nicias* 3.4. For an overview of Athenian *theōriai*, see Rutherford (2004).

³² The word *παῖάν* (or its Attic equivalent *παῖών*) occurs more than 45 times in extant tragedy (not including derivatives such as *παῖωνίζω* or *παῖώνιος* in this count), and is also found in comedy: Aristoph. *Acharn.* 1212, 1223, *Birds* 1763, *Lys.* 1291, *Knights* 1318, *Peace* 453–5, 555, *Thesm.* 308–11, 1035, *Wasps* 874, *Wealth* 636. See Hutchinson (1985) on Aesch. *Seven* 634–5.

can also be explained through the functions of the genre, for moments of religious trepidation and joy are frequent in tragedy.

Tragedy sometimes evokes *paianes* simply because the context is an appropriate one. In these cases the *paian* confirms the emotional tone of the on-stage action: the *paian* represents a religiously and socially correct response to certain situations, which we see mirrored in the world of the play. Thus, for example, in the *parodos* of *Agamemnon*, the Chorus report Calchas' apotropaic use of paeanic language as he prays for Apollo to avert the anger of Artemis (ἰήμιον δὲ καλέω Παιᾶνα, Aesch. Ag. 146). The *paian* which the Chorus sing over the sleeping Philoctetes is also of this type, for the *paian* is an appropriate song to sing in the context of a need for healing (Soph. Phil. 828–32); Neoptolemus later draws on this language, associating Philoctetes' future cure in Troy with the vocabulary of the genre (τοῦτο μὲν παιωνίας / ἐς χεῖρας ἔλθειν, 1345–6).

The use of *paianes* in relevant contexts can easily be inverted to achieve an ironic effect. The celebratory function that the *paian* can perform stands in contrast to the frequently bleak tone of tragedy; hence we find the *paian* evoked in a context which is deliberately unpaeanic: for example in connection with death or lamentation.³³ Thus we find phrases such as 'a *paian* for Hades', playing on the normal opposition between the life-preserving functions of the *paian* with its imagery of brightness, and the darkness and gloom associated with death. Ismene and Antigone (or two semi-choruses) use this phraseology as they mourn their brothers at the end of *Seven Against Thebes* (869–70).³⁴ The Chorus also draw on similar language (856–60), imagining Eteocles' and Polynices' arrival in the 'sunless land of Hades which Apollo cannot tread' (τὰν ἀστιβῆ Ἀπόλλωνι, τὰν ἀνάλιον, 859), and describing them as travelling on the *theoris*, the sacred ship which carried the *theōroi* to Delos to worship Apollo (858). The Herald in *Agamemnon* uses this metaphor to express his own sense that the bad news the Chorus ask for is inappropriate and could pollute the day of victory, calling his tale παιᾶνα τόνδ' Ἐρινύων (645). Similarly, the eponymous heroine in Euripides' *Helen* laments

³³ See Rutherford (2001a) 118–21; Loraux (2002) 65.

³⁴ For the question of authenticity and line-attributions, see Hutchinson (1985) on 861–74.

the death of her mother, brothers, and (as she believes) her husband with a lyric song she describes as a *παιᾶνα νέκυσι* and addresses to Persephone rather than Apollo (175–8).³⁵

These uses of the genre are common in tragedy, but their impact on the plays is not particularly deep. The genre is evoked in order to create a moment of tension or irony; once over, the allusion is no longer relevant, and we are not meant to keep it in mind later during the play. However, the *paian* can also be used in a way which meshes its associations and functions with the themes of the play, to enrich our understanding of the drama. The *paian* in *Philoctetes*, for example, is more than simply a passing allusion, for Philoctetes' physical suffering and the need to achieve a cure lies at the heart of the play (see pp. 30–1 above). When the *paian* is thematically important, we often find a clustering of paeanic imagery rather than an isolated allusion; this encourages the audience to keep the genre in mind. Thus we often find paeanic imagery in plays where Apollo is a central figure, or where ideas of healing or other paeanic functions are integral to the plot. An example of this technique is *Alcestis*, where Alcestis' sickness and death, and her ultimate deliverance, form the centrepiece of the action. The presence of Apollo in the prologue alerts us to the conflict between *paianes* and death, as we see the god of healing in bitter dispute with his rival (29–71). Alcestis' death is surrounded with paeanic language, as Admetus and the Chorus seek to avert the inevitable with an appeal to Apollo Paian. Thus the Chorus pray to Paian for a cure (91–2, 220–5), and recall the story of Asclepius, a paeanic model for health (122–9). After Alcestis' death Admetus asks the Chorus to sing a lament, ironically referring to this as a *paian* as though to highlight the failure of their healing prayers (*πάρεστε καὶ μένοντες ἀντηχήσατε / παιᾶνα τῷ κάτωθεν ἄσπονδον θεῷ*, 423–4), while later the Chorus evoke Apollo once more, only to emphasize that he is unable to offer protection against the power of Necessity (969–72).³⁶

³⁵ Cf. Allan (2008) on 175–8. Other examples of this technique include Aesch. *Cho.* 151; Eur. *Tro.* 578.

³⁶ Parker (2007) on 423–4 suggests that Admetus is requesting the Chorus to challenge Alcestis' death, by continuing to use the language of *paian* rather than mourning.

The relevance of the *paian* may be further underscored by the constant use of light imagery throughout the play, as the characters continually associate light with life, and death with darkness (17–18, 81–2, 205–8, 244–7, 272, 360–2, 435–7, 455–7, 666–8, 691, 722, 851–2, 868–9, 1072–4, 1076). While this is standard imagery for life and death, the frequency with which it is deployed in *Alcestis* suggests that it has thematic importance. Since the audience has already been primed to think of life and healing through the filter of the *paian*, the light imagery may become infused with additional significance. However, Apollo does not protect Alcestis but brings about her death, for it is his love for Admetus which allowed him to exchange his death for that of another (10–14), and it is not the healing powers of Apollo but the athletic prowess of Heracles which eventually leads to her salvation. While Apollo is forced to leave the house to avoid becoming tainted by the presence of death (22–3), Heracles is able to go into the realm of death to rescue Alcestis, and so overcomes the usual polarity of healing and mourning. So the paeanic allusions reinforce the themes of sickness, death, and healing, and alert the audience to how these ideas are handled in the play.³⁷

In plays which deal with the nature of the gods, the *paian* can operate on a still more sophisticated level. As we have seen, the *paian* is associated with a set of religious assumptions about the gods: their role in arbitrating human morality and their beneficence towards mortals. In the context of tragedy, alluding to the *paian* evokes this set of associations, which often contrast with the harsh nature of tragic religion.³⁸ So, for example, when the Herald in *Agamemnon* expresses his hopes and fears on returning home, he prays that Apollo will behave towards them as Paian Apollo rather than the Apollo who fought against the Greeks at Troy (508–13). The conventional prayer for Apollo's beneficence (σωτήρ ἴσθι καὶ παιώνιος, 'be a saviour and healer', 512) takes on a new meaning when we recall that in the mythological tradition to which the play alludes, Apollo has not been a distant kindly figure but the god who led the Trojan attack on the Greek camp and who trampled down the walls (Hom. *Il.*

³⁷ I discuss the use of paeanic language in *Alcestis* more thoroughly in Swift (forthcoming a).

³⁸ Cf. R. Parker (1997).

15.361–4). Thus, the Apollo of *paian* with whom the audience is familiar is merged with the Homeric Apollo, a partisan deity embroiled in mortal affairs. The Cassandra scene exposes a similar conflict between presentations of Apollo. Cassandra begins her lament by repeatedly calling upon Apollo (ὦπολλον ὦπολλον 1073, 1077, 1080, 1085), and the Chorus respond by piously observing that it is inappropriate to mention Apollo in a context of lament (1074–5, 1078–9). The Chorus think of the cultic Apollo whom the audience recognizes from the *paian*, and because of the god's associations with light and life they claim that he should not be invoked in a context of grief (ἦδ' αὖτε δυσφημοῦσα τὸν θεὸν καλεῖ / οὐδὲν προσήκοντ' ἐν γόοις παραστατεῖν, 1078–9). Yet as the audience knows, and as Cassandra later makes clear, Apollo is invoked quite appropriately, as the god of prophecy who has given her the power to see her terrible fate (1202). Thus the *paian* can create a contrast between the world-view associated with the genre and the world-view of tragedy, and the tragedians can use this to achieve a variety of effects.

The two plays that I will discuss in detail in this chapter both make use of the religious assumptions of the *paian* to enhance their presentation of the divine: *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Ion*. A central theme of both plays is the nature of the gods: questions are raised as to the role they play in mortal affairs, and the extent to which their actions can be judged by mortal standards. In both cases, it is Apollo who embodies these ideas and disputes, and, as we shall see, the tragedians make systematic use of imagery derived from the *paian* to explore these themes.

OEDIPUS TYRANNUS

The relevance of the *paian* to *Oedipus Tyrannus* is clear from the play's opening, for we are immediately presented with a city ravaged by plague and in desperate need of healing. It is this need to find a cure for the plague which sets in motion the play's action, and leads to the uncovering of Oedipus' identity. Apollo is therefore implicated both as the god of healing and as the god of prophecy who orders the investigation into the murder of Laius. While it might at first seem that the paeanic language simply expresses the Thebans' hopes for

salvation, it soon becomes clear that the *paian* in this play takes on a more complicated meaning. Singing a *paian* might initially seem a 'realistic' response to the city's plight, yet it soon becomes clear that the *paian* is not simply included to add colour or detail. Rather, paeanic language becomes woven into the play's questions about the nature of the divine, and is used to explore the differing facets of Apollo and of divine justice.

Paeanic language enters the play in the very first lines, where it is used to characterize plague-struck Thebes as Oedipus describes the performance of *paianes* in the city: πόλις δ' ὁμοῦ μὲν θυμιαμάτων γέμει / ὁμοῦ δὲ παιάνων τε καὶ στεναγμάτων ('The city is filled with burning incense, and with both *paianes* and groans', 4–5). The presence of *paianes* is functionally correct, but the juxtaposition between the *paian* and the 'groans' of the suffering Thebans nevertheless strikes an inauspicious note, suggesting a connection between *paianes* and mourning which is usually avoided. Thus from the beginning of the play, we find an ambiguity in the way the *paian* is deployed, and a sense that its normal associations with divine beneficence have somehow become tainted. The *paianes* performed in Thebes indicate a mechanism for the citizens to call upon Apollo's healing power, but we are soon told of another way in which the city can appeal for the god's aid, as Oedipus explains that he has sent Creon to Delphi (69–71). Apollo's role as healer is merged with his role as god of prophecy, for Oedipus expects that he will be able to cure the city through the divine insight offered by the oracle (ἐς τὰ Πυθικά / ἔπεμψα Φοίβου δώμαθ', ὡς πύθοιθ' ὅ τι / δρῶν ἢ τί φωνῶν τήνδ' ἐρυσσάμεν πόλιν, 70–2). The connection between these two roles Apollo holds is made overt by the Priest's lines which end the prologue: Φοῖβος δ' ὁ πέμψας τάσδε μαντείας ἅμα / σωτήρ θ' ἔκοιτο καὶ νόσου πανστήριος ('May Phoebus who sent these prophecies come both as saviour and to put a stop to the disease', 149–50). The reference of the ἅμα in this line is ambiguous: it could simply link σωτήρ and πανστήριος, but it could also link the prophetic and healing functions of Apollo, the sending for the oracle and the cure of the city.³⁹

³⁹ Cf. Jebb (1885) and Dawe (1982) on 149.

The two separate aspects of the god, then, are brought together at the start of the play, before the advice of the oracle has been revealed. The ironic consequences of the consultation are alluded to through the redeployment of concepts of safety and salvation in the prologue. The Priest refers to Oedipus as σωτήρ (48), recalling how he saved the city from the Sphinx; the paeanic connotations of this epithet become more marked when he later uses the same word to refer to Apollo in his capacity as healer (150). The characters are unaware that Oedipus is the cause of the plague, rather than its cure, but Oedipus will indeed be able to save the city, for it is his insistence on pursuing the mysteries of the past that will lead to the discovery of Laius' killer. Oedipus himself relies on the word of the oracle and prays to Apollo that Creon might come bringing news of salvation, using imagery which evokes the *paian*: ὦναξ Ἄπολλον, εἰ γὰρ ἐν τύχῃ γέ τω / σωτήρι βαίῃ λαμπρὸς ὥσπερ ὄμμα τι ('Lord Apollo, may he come to us bright with the fortune of salvation, just as his face is bright', 80–1).⁴⁰ Apollo in his capacity as god of prophecy is evoked through the imagery of light and shining which characterizes the *paian*, in order to bring about an outcome which is fundamentally paeanic. Ultimately, it will be Apollo σωτήρ, working through Oedipus, who brings a stop to the plague not in his capacity as paeanic healer but via the instructions released from his oracle. The play will therefore go on to demonstrate that the two facets of Apollo are in this instance inseparable.⁴¹ The oracular advice sought is a process of healing and purification. The healing process can only be brought about by an investigation which leads to the heart of Apollo's prophetic function, and raises questions about the role of prophecy and fate in human affairs.

⁴⁰ The use of λαμπρός in this sense is unusual: see Dawe (1982) on 81; Lloyd-Jones and Wilson (1997) 48–9 who cite parallels. The striking usage is better explained if we see the metaphor as relating to a wider strand of imagery.

⁴¹ The *paian* as a genre does not separate Apollo's healing and prophetic aspects: Pind. *Pa.* 6 and 8 S–M (D6R, B2 R) both start with an invocation of Delphi 'famous for prophets', and seers are referred to in various of the surviving *paianes* (Pind. *Pa.* 2.77–9 S–M (D2 R), 4.28–30 S–M (D4 R), 7.1–2 and 18 S–M (D7 R), 8.38–44 S–M (A1 R). Rutherford (2001a) 173–4 discusses the theme of prophecy in the *paian* with examples and suggests it is important in Pindar's articulation of the genre.

The *parodos*

The complex nature of the *paian* is further explored in the choral *parodos* which follows these lines, an ode shot through with paeanic language and imagery.⁴² The singing of a *paian* is appropriate in the context, for both the choral grouping itself (citizen males)⁴³ and the context and function of the song (a response to a plague) make the *paian* a relevant and suitable choice of song.⁴⁴ However, the paeanic language is not presented as straightforward but is again undermined by troubling elements in the way it is deployed.⁴⁵

The *parodos* sets out the Chorus's piety and their confidence in traditional religious beliefs, thus setting the stage for their later disillusionment. The ode is framed by an address to Apollo: at the beginning he is addressed as Paian in a phrase resembling a ritual *paian*-tag (ἰήιε Δάλιε Παιάν, 154), while in the final stanza he is called Lyceus (203), an epithet which is sometimes linked to light, and used to invoke Apollo in his capacity as a helper.⁴⁶ These two epithets of Apollo are used to colour his protective role elsewhere in the play: it is Apollo Lyceus whom Jocasta supplicates at 919, while Apollo Paian is invoked again at 172 and 186–7.⁴⁷

The language of the *parodos* is that of traditional piety. The Chorus invoke Apollo by recalling previous help which the god has given them, before asking for his help in the present situation:

⁴² Cf. Burton (1980) 142 'the ode is an elaborate paean'.

⁴³ The Chorus does not consist of young men, as we might normally expect for *paian* (as for any form of choral dance). Nevertheless, they are strongly identified with the community of Thebes (cf. ἄνδρες πολῖται, 512), and so fulfil the communal role of the paeanic chorus.

⁴⁴ For apotropaic *paianes* in sickness, Hom. *Il.* 1.472–4; Ath. 15.678c on the purificatory *paian* composed by Thaletas of Gortyn; Ariphon of Sicyon's '*paian* to Health' (PMG 813 = R30); Ael. Arist. *Hier. Log.* 2 (48); Iamb. *Vita Pyth.* 25.110.8; Aristox. fr. 117. See Rutherford (2001a) 37–8; Keyssner (1933).

⁴⁵ Cf. Stehle (2004) 144–8, who analyses the *parodos* through the failed language of traditional prayer.

⁴⁶ Cf. 919; Soph. *El.* 645, 655, 1379; Aesch. *Seven.* 145, *Suppl.* 686, *Ag.* 1257. See Dawe (1982) on 203.

⁴⁷ Jocasta describes Apollo as ἄγχιστος, a word which can have the same meaning as the English 'a present help in trouble', emphasizing his protective function. Cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 256; Pind. *Pyth.* 9.64. See Dawe (1982) on 919.

εἴ ποτε καὶ προτέρας ἄτας ὕπερ ὀρνημένας πόλει
 ἡγύσατ' ἐκτοπίαν φλόγα πῆματος, ἔλθετε καὶ νῦν. (164–5)

If ever before now when disaster rose up against the city you pushed away the flame of pain, come now too.

This is a common form of religious address, and a ritually correct way of invoking the god.⁴⁸ But beneath this surface of piety, something more complicated is going on and the Chorus's approach to Apollo is less straightforward than it appears. A darker mood creeps in even at the initial address to Apollo, where the Chorus's language suggests fear and uncertainty:

ἐκτέταμαι φοβερὰν φρένα δείματι πάλλων,
 ἰήε Δάλιε Παιάν,
 ἀμφὶ σοὶ ἀζόμενος τί μοι ἢ νέον
 ἢ περιτελλομέναις ὥραις πάλιν ἐξανύσεις χρέος.
 εἰπέ μοι, ὦ χρυσέας τέκνον' Ἑλπίδος, ἄμβροτε
 Φάμα. (153–8)

I am on the rack, my fearful soul shaken with terror, Ieie Delian Paian, I am in dread of you, wondering whether you will extract a new debt, or one renewed with the circling years. Tell me, child of Golden Hope, famous Rumour.

The series of urgent questions builds up a sense of fear: already the implication is that cleansing and purification may not be simple. The suggestion that the city has failed to pay a *χρέος* to the god implies that the plague is some kind of divine punishment, which in turn suggests that Apollo himself is responsible for it. Yet this tacit assumption is contradicted at 190–202, where the Chorus envisage the plague being sent by Ares. This is not a traditional role for the god. Dawe suggests that the association might have arisen via the link between the Peloponnesian War and the plague at Athens.⁴⁹ In fact, however, Sophocles highlights the fact that the association is strange by describing Ares as *ἄχαλκος ἀσπίδων* ('without bronze shields'),

⁴⁸ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 5.116; Sapph. fr 1.5 V; Pind. *Isthm.* 6.42–9; Aristoph. *Knights* 594, *Thesm.* 1155–7.

⁴⁹ Dawe (1982) on 162.

removing the god from his normal function and implicitly cutting off any connection between war and plague.⁵⁰

The effect of this device is to remove any association between the plague and Apollo himself as the god who is normally responsible for *loimos*.⁵¹ At 203–4, Apollo's arrows are presented as the opposite to the plague, and as providing its cure. However, the audience know that the more usual power of these arrows is exactly the opposite. They are the bringers of disease, as portrayed in the opening lines of the *Iliad* (1.44–52). As with the attribution of the plague to Ares, the Chorus remove any negative aspect to their concept of Apollo and leave him as purely beneficent. This might be appropriate in a true *paian*, where straightforward praise of the god would be expected.⁵² However, in the context of the tragic world it strikes an odd note. Moving the blame from Apollo to Ares and specifically denying the war god's normal powers suggests that there is some problem with the Chorus's simple trust in Apollo's goodness. Their theology seems skewed: we know that Apollo is not as they believe.

The Chorus go on to describe the singing of both the *paian* and mourning songs: *παιὼν δὲ λάμπει στονόεσσά τε γῆρυς ὄμανλος* ('the *paian* flashes out, sounding together with the mourning cry', 186). In 'realistic' terms, this makes perfect sense: the Thebans are singing *paianes* in the hope of warding off the plague, and also singing lamentations for their dead. However, as with the similar juxtaposition in the prologue, the conjunction of the two supposed opposites is striking and perhaps inauspicious. At 181–287 of *Seven Against Thebes*, Eteocles criticizes the Chorus for inauspicious singing, and instructs them to 'make a stronger prayer' (*εὖχου τὰ κρείσσω*, 266); they are to sing a *paian* and *ololugmos* (the female equivalent) rather than songs involving lamentation and despair (266–8). He claims that it is impious to express fear of disaster in a prayer for the gods' help (258), and that it is likely to bring about the destruction of

⁵⁰ See Burton (1980) 146–7.

⁵¹ Knox (1957) 9–10 claims that this makes it clear the audience too is not intended to connect the plague with Apollo, but this seems too simplistic: the subtext of the *parodos* is to raise the possibility that Apollo is somehow responsible even while the Chorus overtly deny it, hence creating a sense of uncertainty.

⁵² For depiction of the gods in *paianes*, Rutherford (2001a) 172–3.

the city (254).⁵³ An ancient audience would see something similarly worrying in the mixing of *paian* and *στονόςσσα γήρυς* in Oedipus' Thebes. The songs are described as occurring *ῥμανυλος*, emphasizing the mixing up of the two genres, and highlighting its strangeness.

The *paian* itself is described as 'blazing out' (*λάμπει*). Applying a visual verb to a noun of sound creates a striking image, but as we have seen, *paianes* are connected with imagery of light and shining, and so the metaphor is appropriate.⁵⁴ Within the *parodos*, however, the way this strand of imagery is deployed is ambiguous. We find light imagery applied in a positive way to denote safety and glory. Thebes is called *ἀγλαός* at 152, Artemis is described as having *αἴγλη* at 207, and the torches of Dionysus as *ἀγλαῶψ* at 214. At 164 the gods are asked to 'shine forth' to protect the city (*προφάνητε*). The theme of brightness and shining is picked up by the use of adjectives with 'gold' (*πολυχρύσου* 151, *χρυσέας* 158, *χρυσέα* 186, *χρυσοστρόφων* 203). The religious overtone is strengthened by the fact that all these adjectives are used to refer to a god or have some other type of religious connection (the Delphic oracle at 151, Hope personified as a deity at 158).⁵⁵

However, another type of brightness is brought to the ode by the use of fire imagery, of which there is a great deal. The connotations of this imagery are more ambiguous. Fire is used as a weapon by the gods who are called upon to protect Thebes. Zeus wields the *κεραυνός* at 202, Artemis' protective brightness is described as *πυρφόρος* at 206, and Dionysus provides protection with his blazing torches at 213–15.⁵⁶ However, fire represents the threat which Apollo is described as averting at 166 (*φλόγα πῆματος*). Ares, the cause of the plague, is called *μαλερός* (190), an adjective used as an epithet of fire by Homer, and found with the meaning 'blazing' or 'fiery' elsewhere

⁵³ See Hutchinson (1985) 74 and on 258.

⁵⁴ For parallels, Pind. *Ol.* 9.21–2, *Isth.* 4.62; Bacchyl. 4.80; Aesch. *Pers.* 395, *Seven* 286; Eur. *El.* 694–5. Also see Dawe (1982) on 186; Segal (1977) 88–91.

⁵⁵ Dawe (1982) finds the use of 'golden' as applied to Hope at 158 poetically unsatisfactory, but suggests that the connection with brightness is the main point of the usage here.

⁵⁶ The *κεραυνός* is specifically the thunder-bolt, and so is usually described as flaming, or carrying fire (e.g. Hom. *Od.* 23.330; [Aesch.] *PV* 668, 922, *Seven* 445; Aristoph. *Clouds* 395, *Birds* 1747).

in poetry.⁵⁷ His effect on the city is to burn it up with fire (φλέγει, 191). We have already been prepared for these negative associations of fire imagery in the prologue, where the Priest describes the god of plague as ὁ πυρφόρος θεός ('the fire-bearing god', 27). It is not feasible to separate 'bad' fire from 'good' light here: the phrase πυρφόρους αἴγλας ('fiery brightness', 206–7) shows that the two are being put together.⁵⁸ Indeed, this merging of protective and aggressive fire is continued in the first stasimon, where the Chorus envisage Apollo leaping upon the murderer with fire and lightning as his weapons (ἔνοπλος γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐπενθρόσκει / πυρὶ καὶ στεροπαῖς ὁ Διὸς γενέτας, 469–70).

Again, the language which the Chorus use undermines the religious picture which they are setting up. Using the language of the *paian*, the Chorus try to present light imagery as simple *euphēmia*: part of the ritually correct vocabulary of the genre they allude to. However, the straightforward Apollo of the *paian* does not sit comfortably with the complex and morally questionable Apollo of the *Oedipus*. Though the Chorus does not yet realize it, Apollo's healing power is not without its cost. Just as light and fire are ambiguous, balanced between salvation and destruction, Apollo's powers may save mankind, but they can also harm it.

Closing the circle: paeanic imagery in the third stasimon

The opening *parodos*, then, uses the language of the *paian* to hint at a mismatch between the norms of paeanic song and those of tragedy. The *paian* ought to be a straightforward prayer for the god's beneficence but in the context of the play it takes on troubling overtones, implying an anxiety about the divine healing which will be provided. The use of paeanic imagery to express these ideas

⁵⁷ Hom. *Il.* 9.242, 20.316, 21.375; Hes. *Shield* 18; *πυρὸς μαλερὰ γνάθος*; Pind. *Ol.* 9.22.

⁵⁸ Burton (1980) 147 notes the predominance of fire imagery, and also that it is applied to both the forces against which the Chorus are praying and the forces which they summon to their aid. Segal (1977) 89–90 sees the fire and light imagery in the ode as interconnected, and comments (90) 'the earlier sections of the ode have given us little encouragement to think that this divine fire is benign'.

re-emerges in the third stasimon (1086–1109), which sets a tone of ungrounded optimism in the moment immediately before the play's terrible revelation, a technique which Sophocles uses elsewhere.⁵⁹ The Chorus look forward with excitement to discovering Oedipus' parentage, and anticipate dancing in honour of Cithaeron. At the end of the first stanza they address Apollo, in a phrase which looks like a *paian*-tag: ἰήϊε Φοῖβε, σοὶ δὲ / ταῦτ' ἀρέστ' εἶη ('Teie Phoebus, may these things be pleasing to you', 1096–7).

At first glance this looks like appropriate language for anticipating a joyous discovery, and the paeanic overtones of the invocation could be explained as alluding to a celebratory *paian*. But from the audience's point of view the lines are ironic. The discovery Oedipus is about to make is the opposite of the Chorus's fantasy of divine parentage (1098–1109), and Oedipus' connection with Cithaeron is a source of pollution, not glory.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it is pleasing to Apollo that this discovery should be made—it is the purification which he has demanded. The paeanic language here evokes the *parodos* and reminds us of the Chorus's plea to Apollo to remove the cause of the plague. Our own knowledge of what is about to happen thus adds a *frisson* to the Chorus's use of the *paian* here. The wishful thinking and simple religiosity of the Chorus is brought into contrast with the complexities we see within the play. The redemption which the Chorus asks for is not simple.

The *paian* is therefore introduced early in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, creating an association between the lyric genre and the process of healing which the play will trace. Reintroducing the genre shortly before Oedipus' climactic discovery of his identity reminds the audience that the *paian* is thematically linked to the ideas that are being played out on-stage. The use of paeanic language is linked to two of the play's most central preoccupations. Firstly, as a religious genre with its own conventions about the nature of Apollo and the divine, the *paian* feeds into the play's discussion of religion and the gods. Secondly, the *paian*'s association with light and brightness

⁵⁹ Soph. *Ant.* 1115–54, *Aj.* 693–718, *Trach.* 633–62. Jebb (1885) dubs this type of song a '*hyporchēma*'. See also Campbell (1879) and Kamerbeek (1967) on 1086; also Webster (1936) 106; Kranz (1933) 213.

⁶⁰ Cf. Sansone (1975) 113.

connects it to the theme of light and darkness which runs throughout the play, and is used as a metaphor for different forms of human knowledge.

Religion and divine justice

The tension between traditional religious views and the way the gods actually behave is a central theme of the play, and the use of *paian* imagery enhances and enriches this theme. The Chorus set out the standard civic view in the second stasimon (863–910): the gods dictate human morality, and punish those who transgress their laws.⁶¹ The Chorus see this rule as fundamental to their world-view: if the gods fail to uphold this code and to keep their word (exemplified in the play by the oracles sent to Laius), they can no longer see any point in religious practice (883–910).⁶² The irony of the second stasimon lies in the gap between the Chorus's concept of the gods' justice and what we know is going to happen. The Chorus envisage the issue as clear-cut. The man who violates the gods' laws is arrogant and disdainful, and has made a conscious choice not to respect the established order (884–7). Such a man deserves punishment, and if no punishment occurs, it will shatter the Chorus's faith in religious practice: *εἰ γὰρ αἱ τοιαῖδε πράξεις τίμιαι, / τί δεῖ με χορεύειν;* ('If such deeds are held in honour, why should I dance in the chorus?' 895–6).

The audience, however, knows that the situation in Thebes is rather more complex: Oedipus is not the calculating transgressor whom the Chorus assume Laius' murderer must be. The Chorus's analysis leaves no space for the moral ambiguity when someone

⁶¹ For the gods punishing human arrogance and transgression, Hom. *Od.* 1.368–80, 17.483–7, 24.351–2; Hes. *Works* 180–201; Archil. fr. 177 W; Solon fr. 13.11–32 W; Pind. *Ol.* 13.6–10; Bacchyl. 15.50–63 M; Aesch. *Eum.* 511–48, *Pers.* 800–31, *Suppl.* 879–81; Soph. *Trach.* 280. For the conventionality of the religious views of the second stasimon, Sheppard (1920) 12–13; Kranz (1933) 218–19; Gellie (1964) 114; Carey (1986).

⁶² The interpretation of the details and argument of the second stasimon raises more questions than are within the remit of this book to answer. See Jebb (1885) *ad loc.*; Gellie (1964); Winnington-Ingram (1980) 179–204; Carey (1986); Sidwell (1992); Brandenburg (2005) for an overview of the problems of interpreting the ode.

transgresses unintentionally. When the shocking truth is finally revealed, no one in the play doubts that it is right for Oedipus to be punished. As commentators have pointed out, it is the act itself which brings *miasma* on the community, not the moral status of the agent who has committed it.⁶³ Yet our feelings towards Oedipus' punishment are surely not the righteous trust in the moral system which the second stasimon assumes.

Throughout the play we are reminded of the gods' role in Oedipus' fate through the figure of Apollo. It was Apollo's oracle which gave Oedipus and Laius the original prophecies (711–14, 787–94); it was also Apollo to whom Oedipus turned when the plague struck (69–72), and his oracle which instructed him to look for the killer (95–107). At the start of the play we are told that the Thebans are calling upon Apollo for his powers of healing and purification as well as his prophetic powers (5, 149–50). When asked which of the gods led him to blind himself, Oedipus' immediate response is to blame Apollo, before also accepting his own responsibility for the deed (1329–32). The discovery of Oedipus' true identity which leads him to blind himself is part of the process of purification that the city and Oedipus himself have asked for, yet we are also aware that it is the gods' will that originally burdened Oedipus with his dreadful fate.

When the truth is revealed, the Chorus do not blame the gods for what has happened or suggest that they have behaved wrongly. There is undoubtedly a difference between the divine justice of the play's end and the Chorus's vision of the second stasimon, yet this difference is left for the audience to ponder, rather than being commented on by Chorus or characters. While the gods are shown to uphold their oracles, and hence the Chorus's fears are allayed, we are nevertheless at a loss as to why Oedipus is made to suffer the fate that he does. Sophocles deliberately downplays any sense of causality behind the original oracle given to Laius, compressing it into a brief report by Jocasta (711–14). Other accounts of the myth play up Laius' own culpability in his family's fate: thus for example the Pisander scholion on Euripides' *Phoenissae* (Teubner arg. 11=Σ 1760) tells us the myth of Laius' rape of Chrysippus, which led to his punishment by the

⁶³ e.g. Sheppard (1920) 24–7; Bowra (1944) 168–70; Musurillo (1957) 39; Gellie (1964) 122; Dodds (1966) 38–40, 43–4; cf. Parker (1983) 317–18.

gods: a story also dealt with in Euripides' *Chrysippus*.⁶⁴ Similarly, *Phoenissae* makes it clear that Laius was warned about the penalties of attempting to conceive a child and disobeyed the oracle in a moment of drunken lust (ἡδονῇ <ν>δούς εἷς τε βακχείαν πεσών, *Phoen.* 21), thus foregrounding Laius' guilt and presenting Oedipus as a divine punishment for his father's crime. Aeschylus' Theban trilogy appears also to have emphasized the sequence of mistakes made by the Labdacid house, again providing an intelligible sense of causality behind Oedipus' fate. We are told that Laius three times received an oracle that he must die without issue in order to save his city (*Seven* 745–9), and that he deliberately disobeyed (ἀβουλία, 750, δυσβουλία, 802, βουλαι δ' ἄπιστοι, 842).⁶⁵ Laius' disregard for the warning of the oracle provides a satisfactory explanation for Oedipus' own fate, since Oedipus is punished for his father's crimes and we need not look for any moral flaw in his own character to justify his fate.⁶⁶

By contrast, in *Oedipus Tyrannus* Jocasta gives no reason for, or background to, the oracle, presenting it as an event from out of the blue. The phrasing of the oracle is also ambiguous (ὥς αὐτὸν ἥξει μοῖρα πρὸς παιδὸς θανεῖν / ὅστις γένοιτ' ἐμοῦ τε καὶ κείνου πάρα, 'that he would meet his fate and die at the hands of the child who would be born to him and me', 713–14).⁶⁷ The optative (γένοιτ') suggests that Oedipus had not yet been conceived, and hence that Laius and Jocasta had the opportunity to avoid their fate by avoiding intercourse, but any sense of a condition is not made explicit but left for the audience to infer.⁶⁸ The compressed form in which the oracle is given encourages the audience not to dwell on the reasons for the oracle. Instead, Sophocles diverts our attention to the process by which the oracle comes true, and Oedipus' role in bringing about his own downfall. Indeed, when Oedipus himself learns about the oracle,

⁶⁴ The relationship of the myth in the scholion to *Phoenissae* is much debated: see Mastronarde (1994) 31–8; West (1999) 42–3.

⁶⁵ Sommerstein (1996) 123; West (1999) 39–42, who challenges the idea that the oracle given to Laius constituted a curse; Lloyd-Jones (2002).

⁶⁶ For the difference between Sophocles and the other tragedians in handling inherited guilt, see Sewell-Rutter (2007) ch. 5.

⁶⁷ Cf. Kamerbeek (1967) 8; Keddle (1976) 26–7.

⁶⁸ See Jebb (1885) *ad loc.*

it is no longer conditional and is simply presented as a prediction (790–2). For this reason, readers have sometimes tried to make sense of the play by looking for a failing or character flaw in Oedipus which can explain why he is made to suffer.⁶⁹ In fact, however, Sophocles deliberately leaves the solution ambiguous, thus going against the usual convention of the myth. Oedipus is presented not as a divine tool of vengeance for his parents' crimes but as a self-willed agent, and it is his punishment, not Laius', that the play portrays. Nevertheless, the removal of the inherited guilt leads us to question why Oedipus has to be cursed at all. Accounts of Oedipus' 'flaws' tend to be unsatisfactory, for the play stresses his admirable qualities rather than his bad ones, and makes it clear that he is a good king who is driven above all by his desire to protect his citizens.⁷⁰ Again, we should see this as deliberate, rather than desperately seeking character flaws to explain why Oedipus deserves to suffer. Thus, *Oedipus Tyrannus* avoids a simple presentation of the gods as moral arbiters, and leaves its audience unclear about their motivations for deciding on Oedipus' fate. Oedipus embodies the truth that bad things can happen to fundamentally good people, but it is left to the audience to try to connect this with the Chorus's expectations of divine justice.

This gap between choral expectation and tragic 'reality' is highlighted by the Chorus's question τί δέῃ με χορεύειν; ('Why should I dance in the chorus?' 896). As various scholars have noted, the phrasing draws our attention to the Chorus's status *qua* chorus, and in doing so strains the dramatic mimesis which confines them to the world of mythological Thebes.⁷¹ The Chorus's language does not simply refer to their status as a tragic chorus, but also indicates the wider tradition of *choreia* to which they belong.⁷² The religious expectations of the Chorus are not only those of the old men of

⁶⁹ See Dodds (1966) 38–42 for a rebuttal of this approach.

⁷⁰ Oedipus is by no means perfect, but his negative qualities are demonstrated in mitigating circumstances: for example, Oedipus' anger with Tiresias and his belief that the prophet is conspiring against him is initially prompted by the prophet's refusal to talk, which Oedipus feels to be a betrayal of Thebes: 322–3, 326–7, 330–1, 340.

⁷¹ Knox (1957) 47; Dodds (1966) 46; Segal (1981) 235; Rusten (1990) 46; Henrichs (1995) 65–73.

⁷² Cf. Henrichs (1995) 58–9.

Thebes, but also allude to the morality of choral lyric (such as the *paian*), which tends to uphold a scheme of divine justice and punishment of human transgression.⁷³ The paeanic allusions that the Chorus have already used thus remind us of the lyric world outside of tragedy and its expectations regarding divine behaviour. So when the Chorus threaten to end their own *choreia*, their discomfort springs from their understanding of what *choreia* means in Greek society, and the values that choral song usually embodies. The Chorus have alluded to these beliefs earlier in the play, and when they consider ceasing their song, the audience is encouraged to consider the function that choral song performs, and whether its morality is compatible with the world of the play.

The allusions to the *paian* thus serve to remind us of the paeanic model for divine morality. Yet as we have seen, the *paian* in *Oedipus* is constantly presented as problematic, and the language used of it is at odds with the usual conventions of the genre. The gap between the normal expectations associated with the *paian* and how it is actually presented in *Oedipus* create a mood of concern which is at variance with the straightforward piety we normally find in the genre. This sense that all is not well is confirmed by the Chorus's concern about the religious world of the play, and their threat to cease their dance hints at the failure of the lyric mode of religion in a tragic world. Apollo is the only god to have an important role in the play, yet the Chorus generalize from his behaviour to the gods in general, encouraging us to do so too. Apollo stands for the whole divine order, and the characters' attitudes to him represent attitudes towards all the gods. The paeanic theme of the play, then, is not specific to Apollo but primes us to think about the nature of the gods, and whether we can align the commonplaces of piety with what we see of divine justice in the world of the play and by extension the world outside it.

On the surface, the end of *Oedipus* appears to confirm an uncompromising form of divine justice: the gods bring ruin to the guilty, and intention is not relevant. However, Oedipus' ignorance of his

⁷³ For example, *epinikia* frequently warn victors to avoid arrogance (see Ch. 4); similarly, in Alc. fr. 1 *PMGF* the chorus of *parthenoi* remind the onlookers of divine justice (ἐστὶ τις σιών τίσις, 36).

own wrongdoing lies at the heart of the play and is crucial in determining the audience's emotional response to his fate. Thus the fact that no character makes this conflict explicit is not important, for the moral issues that surround intention and ignorance are at the centre of the play's concerns. The form of divine justice which the play presents is a traditional one, found throughout Greek literature and dating back to the gods' punishment of the whole city of Troy for the sin of a single man. The paeanic imagery ties in with the Chorus's own religious views to present a more upbeat view of divine morality, but this is not one which the events of the play confirm, since the Chorus's simplistic dichotomy between virtuous men and sinners is shown to be flawed. Yet presenting the morality of the *paian* within a tragic world prevents the audience from making a neat distinction between the beneficent gods of lyric and cult and the harsh gods of tragedy. Juxtaposing both sets of ideas about the gods alerts us to the fact that both sets of views coexist, and reminds us that it can be difficult to believe in beneficent gods in a world that is frequently harsh and unfair. Thus the *paian* is used to indicate a form of religious morality which the play encourages us to question. The *paian's* familiarity from the world of religious practice outside the play helps the audience to make connections between the different claims and assumptions made of the gods in different contexts, as well as encouraging them to consider whether it is the morality of the *paian* or of the tragic gods which operates in their own lives.

Light, sight, and blindness

The paeanic imagery of *Oedipus Tyrannus* is also connected to another major theme: that of sight and blindness. Knowledge and discovery are central issues raised by the play, and they are developed through the imagery of sight and blindness, light and darkness.⁷⁴ This is emphasized by the paradox that the blind see, while those with physical sight are intellectually blind. Oedipus in his ignorance taunts Tiresias for his blindness (370–5). When he finally sees the

⁷⁴ The themes of sight and blindness are much discussed, e.g. Hembold (1951); Musurillo (1957) 43; Harsh (1958) 250, 258; Vernant (1978) 479–80.

truth about his past, his response is to blind himself, exchanging a figurative for a physical state of darkness. Oedipus claims he cannot bear to see the world in the knowledge of what he has done (1369–90). The Chorus respond to the revelation of his true identity with a wish they had never seen him, again using sight to stand for knowledge (1216–22). The revelation is described in terms of bringing to light and illuminating (132, 473–5, 754, 1059, 1063, 1182–4), a standard metaphor which takes on new life in a context where light imagery is used with such structural and thematic importance.

As we have seen, light imagery is also characteristic of the *paian*, where it is used to indicate healing and salvation. In *Oedipus*, the *paian* is first presented through this light imagery in the *parodos*, but the language takes on new connotations and becomes sinister as well as protective. The imagery is poised between safety and harm, as the light of protection becomes merged with the dangerous fire which attacks Thebes, foreshadowing the ambiguous result of the assistance the Chorus pray for. Here too, the normal expectations of the genre are evoked in order to demonstrate how they fail to operate appropriately within the world of the play. Whereas in the paeanic world the imagery of brightness is fused with the positive and healthy nature of the genre, in the tragedy it is impossible to separate this light from the harmful fire which the Chorus also imagine.

The light imagery is thus used as a mechanism to link the paeanic imagery with the play's theme of knowledge and discovery, for the imagery both represents the traditional *euphēmia* of the *paian* and the quest to uncover the identity of the killer. Just as the light in the *parodos* belongs both to the plague and to the gods whom the Chorus hope will protect them, so too the light of knowledge in the play is ambiguous. Knowledge of the killer's identity is the healing light which will save the city, but this knowledge is what destroys Oedipus and thrusts him into darkness. The light imagery also underscores the connection between the healing of Thebes and the search for knowledge, through the paeanic association between light and healing. The process of discovery is also a journey towards the salvation of the city, symbolized by the 'light' of knowledge which will allow the expulsion of the killer. Yet the play ends in darkness and destruction, as Oedipus' discovery of the truth leads him to reject the literal light of day. Again we are shown that lyric norms take on a

double-edged meaning in a tragic world, for the light of *Oedipus* turns out to be a dangerous force, and the healing power of Apollo does not come without a human cost.

ION

Although the tone of the two plays is very different, in terms of plot and theme *Ion* has much in common with *Oedipus Tyrannus*.⁷⁵ Both plays centre on a search for identity and the recognition of child and parent, and in both cases Apollo is integral to the action. The plot of *Ion* is driven by Apollo's decisions and actions: firstly, his rape of Creousa; secondly, his desire to reunite her with her son. The play's setting at Delphi also emphasizes the god's role, for his shrine and the prophetic powers of his oracle form the constant backdrop to the events on-stage. Like *Oedipus*, the play raises questions about the nature of the gods and of divine justice, and the language of the *paian* is also deployed to assist the way these ideas are presented.

The attitude the play engenders towards Apollo is ambiguous, and has been much debated by modern critics.⁷⁶ Within the play, Apollo faces severe criticism from the human characters, as both Ion and Creousa condemn his behaviour in raping a mortal woman and then abandoning her.⁷⁷ Whereas divine rapes are normally in poetry and myth depicted in a positive light and without moral judgement, in *Ion* Apollo is regarded as though he were a mortal rapist: a point made explicit by Ion, who sarcastically suggests that the god should

⁷⁵ Cf. Conacher (1969).

⁷⁶ Scholarship on the divine in *Ion* has frequently tended to follow either Creousa's or Ion's line, either totally condemning Apollo or defending him from all charges: for the former camp cf. e.g. Murray (1913); Norwood (1954); Rosenmeyer (1963); for the latter, see Wasserman (1940); Burnett (1962); Heath (1987*b*) 54–6. For an overview of this issue, see Swift (2008) ch. 3.

⁷⁷ Scholars who seek to defend Apollo often claim that the abandonment is the real issue rather than the rape, and that since the god has not in fact neglected his baby the charges against Apollo are unfounded. However, Ion makes clear in his response to Creousa's story that he objects to the rape as well as to Apollo's subsequent behaviour (339–41): see Conacher (1969); Lloyd (1986*a*) 36–7.

be obliged to pay a fine as a human offender would (444–7). Ion expects the gods to behave by the same standards as they impose on mortals, and sees their greater power as all the more reason why they should set a good example (ἀλλ', ἐπεὶ κρατεῖς, / ἀρετὰς δίωκε, 'since you have power, pursue virtue', 439–40).⁷⁸ Creousa, rather than seeing her divine pregnancy as a source of honour, behaves as though she had been raped by a mortal man and conceals the pregnancy in fear and shame (φρίκα ματρός, 898). Apollo's refusal to appear at the end of the play suggests that even the god himself regards his behaviour as immoral (or at the least embarrassing), as he sends Athene in his stead 'in case blame should be openly expressed for the events of the past' (μὴ τῶν πάροιθε μέμψις ἐς μέσον μόλη, 1558). The idea that the gods should abide by mortal standards may be found in contemporary philosophy, but it is not in line with the traditions of Greek poetry, which stresses the gulf between gods and men.⁷⁹ Similarly, the play challenges our expectation that the gods' power and knowledge make the enactment of their will inevitable: Hermes' confident predictions about the future unravel as Apollo's failure to anticipate how Creousa will react to a stepson nearly results in Ion's death. Thus the audience is encouraged to question the true nature of the divine, as we see the characters themselves doing throughout the play. As we shall see, the language of the *paian* is once more used in this process of questioning to evoke religious ideas implicit in other poetic forms. As in *Oedipus*, the use of paeanic language builds up a set of expectations about the gods which are then undermined by what we see in the play.

Ion's monody

As with *Oedipus*, paeanic imagery is particularly marked at the start of the play, and is found in Ion's opening monody: a song in praise of

⁷⁸ This motif is found elsewhere in Euripidean drama: cf. *Her.* 342; *Hipp.* 120; *Bacch.* 1348.

⁷⁹ For criticism of 'double standards' as applied to gods and men, cf. Pl. *Euthyph.* 53–6b; *Rep.* 2.377e–391e. For the handling of these themes in Euripides, see Lefkowitz (1989).

Apollo which the boy sings as he performs his daily tasks at the sanctuary (82–183).⁸⁰ What marks this monody out as unusual is that it is not simply an allusion to religious songs; rather it is (within the world of the play) a real act of worship, sung in the context of other forms of sacred activity. This impression is strengthened by the use of ritual language throughout the song. In particular, Ion twice sings what is virtually a *paian*-refrain:⁸¹

ὦ Παιὰν ὦ Παιάν,
 εὐαίων εὐαίων
 εἴης, ὦ Λατοῦς παῖ. (125–7=141–3)

O Paian, O Paian, may you be fortunate, may you be fortunate, son of Leto.

As in real *paianes*, the refrain comes at the end of a stanza as though the climax of the praise.⁸² The ritualistic feel is strengthened by the assonance of euphemistic words; its repetition in the ode creates the sensation of a religious refrain rather than simply a paeanic reference. Metrically, the refrain consists of molossi, which are characteristic of hymns.⁸³

References to the *paian* are not limited to this ritual refrain; the atmosphere of the genre permeates the song as a whole, and is established in the set of anapaests which open the song. The opening words, celebrating the dawn, create a paeanic feel with their imagery of light and the sun (82–8). Words of shining are repeated: the chariot of the sun is called *λαμπρά* (82), while the sun himself shines forth (*λάμπει*, 83) and is described as a fire (*πῦρ*, 84), causing the peaks of Parnassus to reflect back the beam in response (*καταλαμπρόμεναι*, 87). This then ties in with the picture of piety set up by the description of religious practices at the sanctuary which follows: Ion describes the smoke from sacrifices (89–90), the Pythia's prophecies (91–2), and ritual purification in the spring of Castalia

⁸⁰ Rutherford (1995a) 130 suggests that celebrating sacred activity may be an appropriate function for a *paian*, citing Simon. fr. 35(b), 6 PMG 519; Pind. *Pa.* 7b. 21–2.

⁸¹ As Rutherford (1995a) 130 notes, this is the closest to an actual *paian*-refrain we find in tragedy. Lee (1997) on 125–7 notes that it is surprising Apollo should be invoked as Paian here.

⁸² Ford (2006) 286–7.

⁸³ Owen (1939) on 125–7; West (1982) 55–6.

(94). As well as the words indicating shining or brightness, Ion's language is also punctuated by other ritually correct words describing the sanctuary and the rituals which take place there: *ἱερός* (85, 104); *ζάθεος* (91); *καθαρός* (96, 105); *στόμα τ' εὐφημον φρουρεῖτ' ἀγαθόν* (98); *φῆμαι ἀγαθαί* (99).⁸⁴

The central strophic pair, which contains the *paian*-refrain, describes the ritual task Ion is currently engaged in: sweeping the temple with a laurel broom. Ion continues to use religiously correct *euphēmia* in his description of his activities: the sacred laurel is *καλλίστη* (113), and the waters that nourish it *ἱεραί* (117); the work itself is *καλός* (128), *κλεινός* (131), and *εὐφάμος* (134), and it is in honour of a god whose beneficent nature is stressed: *ὠφέλιμος* (139).

The idea of religious purity is also implicit in Ion's threat to the birds in the second set of anapaests (154–83).⁸⁵ The birds' attempt to nest in the temple will defile it, and is described as damaging the purity of the shrine: *ὡς ἀναθήματα μὴ βλάπτεται / ναοί θ' οἱ Φοίβου* (177–8). Ion's reluctance to harm the birds because of their own religious symbolism is set against his duty to Apollo:

κτείνειν δ' ὑμᾶς αἰδοῦμαι
 τοὺς θεῶν ἀγγέλλοντας φήμας
 θνατοῖς· οἷς δ' ἔγκειμαι μόχθοις,
 Φοίβω δουλεύσω, κοῦ λήξω
 τοὺς βόσκοντας θεραπεύων. (179–83)

I feel ashamed to kill you, since you are the messengers of the gods to mortals. But I serve Phoebus in my appointed tasks, and I will not stop serving those who nourish me.

The overt relevance of the *paian*, made explicit through the refrain, is therefore strengthened by the religious and ritualistic language throughout the rest of Ion's song. The song as a whole sets up a sense of simple piety and trust in the divine; the medium that Euripides chooses to enhance this tone is the language of the *paian*.

The paeanic language here is not simply decorative but is important in characterizing Ion and his beliefs about religion. Ion's

⁸⁴ Lee (1997) on 94–101 comments on Ion's 'obsession with ritual purity' and 'sensitivity to appropriate language'.

⁸⁵ Cf. Lee (1997) on 107, 177.

language here indicates his faith in the divine order, which he perceives to be beautiful and wholly beneficent. He stresses his joy in performing his duties at the temple (131–5) as well as the personal devotion he feels towards the god whose temple has provided for his nurture (109–11, 136–7). The paeanic language creates a sense of tradition, characterizing Ion's beliefs as religiously conventional. Thus, as in *Oedipus*, the *paian* is used to represent a certain set of beliefs about the gods: the idea that they are beneficent enforcers of morality on earth. This set of beliefs is challenged as the play progresses, and Ion is forced to consider whether the gods can in fact live up to his initial expectations of them.

Creousa's monody

Structurally, Ion's song is echoed by Creousa's monody (859–922), when, under the pressure of learning about Ion's adoption by Xouthus, she reveals the truth about her rape by Apollo. The pattern of the song echoes the structure of a traditional religious song but the standard motifs are turned on their head: Creousa uses the norms of praise to condemn the god, not celebrate him.⁸⁶ Thus Creousa's song recalls the traditional piety of Ion's song in order to challenge the beliefs about the gods expressed in the earlier monody. For example, Creousa addresses Apollo by listing two of his traditional roles, as patron of music and god of prophecy (881–6, 907–10), and mentioning his seats at Delos and Delphi, his two most important cult sites (907–10, 919–22).⁸⁷ In both cases she refers specifically to Apollo's cult there, referring to the delivery of oracles at Delphi (*ὁμφὰν κληροῖς*, 908) and the aetiology of Apollo's birth at Delos (*λοχεύματα σέμν' ἐλοχεύσατο / Λατώ*, 921–2). However, this traditional language strikes an off-key note. Apollo's musical powers are contrasted with his behaviour in the play, as Creousa describes him playing the lyre as his son is killed (902–6, quoted below). Similarly, Apollo's role as

⁸⁶ Cf. Larue (1963); Furley (1999–2000) 189–90; Zacharia (2003) 90–2; Lee (1997) on 859–922.

⁸⁷ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 1.37–42, where Chryses prays to Apollo by naming his cult sites and titles; *HHAp.*, which tells the story of Apollo's association with his cult sites.

prophet has become tainted by our knowledge that it is Apollo's use of his oracle to give Xouthos a son that has prompted Creousa's outburst. Finally, she also claims that Delos, far from being a place of special honour to Apollo, hates and rejects him (*μισεῖ σ' ἃ Δᾶλος*, 919).⁸⁸ Creousa thus suggests that Apollo's unfair treatment of her and lack of care for her child is indicative of a lack of respect for parenthood. She therefore implies a corresponding lack of respect for his own birthplace, which accounts for Delos' hostility.⁸⁹ In the light of this, her repeated invocation of the god as 'son of Leto' (885, 907) takes on new overtones. Whereas normally in religious poetry, addressing the god by his parentage would be honorific, it now becomes a mechanism for highlighting his bad treatment of Creousa.

Creousa's monody therefore evokes the traditional religious language and belief set up by Ion's monody, only to undermine these ideas by contrasting their optimism with Creousa's experience of pain and suffering. We also find an echo of the earlier monody's paeanic language, as Creousa imagines Apollo singing *paianes* and sets it against her own despair:

καὶ νῦν ἔρρει
 πτανοῖς ἄρπασθεὶς θοῖνα
 παῖς μοι καὶ σοί.
 τλάμων, σὺ δὲ <καὶ> κιθάρα κλάζεις
 παιᾶνας μέλπων. (902–6)

Now my son and yours is gone, snatched away by the birds for a feast. But you, hard-hearted that you are, jangle away on your cithara singing *paianes*.

Creousa describes Apollo engaging in activities with which he is traditionally associated: lyre-playing and *paianes*.⁹⁰ However, Ion's use of the *paian* at the start of the play has set it up as a model for a set of normative assumptions about the god, and Creousa's reference triggers this association. Here too the *paian* represents a morally simple view of the god, which is in stark opposition to Creousa's

⁸⁸ Contrast *HHAp.* 118, where the earth of Delos smiles with joy at the birth of Apollo (*μείδῃσε δὲ γαί' ὑπένερθεν*).

⁸⁹ Owen (1939) and Lee (1997) on 919 comment on the contrast these lines set up between Ion's birth and Apollo's birth.

⁹⁰ Cf. *HHAp.* 201–6 for Apollo as a citharode.

experience. Her response is to contrast the two versions of Apollo explicitly; she thus draws out the same tension between the morality the gods represent and the way they in fact behave which Ion has grappled with earlier. But whereas Ion uses the *paian* to portray Apollo as beneficent and protective, Creousa uses it to represent his abdication of responsibility to his child.⁹¹

Creousa's monody is also imbued with paeanic allusion elsewhere, and again, these allusions are used to create a worrying picture of the god. As in Ion's song, we find a series of images of light and brightness in connection with Apollo. The rape scene itself uses this language particularly richly:

ἡλθές μοι χρυσῶ χαίταν
μαρμαίρων, εὖτ' ἐς κόλπους
κρόκεα πέταλα φάρεσιν ἔδρεπον
†ἀνθίζειν† χρυσαντανυγῇ. (887–90)

You came to me, your hair shining with gold, when I was gathering yellow flowers into the folds of my robe, to bloom with a golden light.

Apollo himself is described with two adjectives in close proximity indicating brightness (*χρυσῶ*, *μαρμαίρων*) while Creousa's yellow flowers reflect the gleam (*χρυσαντανυγῇ*). The traditional language of light therefore decorates what might appear to be any divine seduction scene, where a young girl has an erotic encounter in a flowery meadow.⁹² In this case, however, Creousa overturns the conventions of myth, presenting the rape as a traumatic event and a source of shame.⁹³ Thus the light imagery creates an ironic effect, coming in a context where we have been primed to expect the normal rules of divine seductions to fail. The light imagery reminds us of the

⁹¹ Cf. Rutherford (1995a) 131.

⁹² The mythological *locus classicus* is the abduction of Persephone (*HHDem.* 2–16); see also Hom. *Il.* 14.294–351; *HH Aph.* 75–156; Archil. fr. 196a W; Theoc. 11.25–7. For the parallels between the *Ion* scene and a mortal seduction/rape scene, see Larue (1963) 132; Rabinowitz (1993) 197–8; Lee (1997) on 888–90. For rape in myth, see Lefkowitz (1993); Deacy (1997).

⁹³ Compare the divine seduction in Pind. *Pyth.* 9.26–75, which is presented as causing no distress to the woman and is a source of honour to her and her descendants, or Pind. *Ol.* 6.29–43, where the potential difficulties are quickly smoothed over and the divine child is a source of rejoicing: cf. Loraux (1993) 189. See Sommerstein (2006) for a discussion of rape in tragedy.

usual expectations about Apollo, and by their traditional nature further enhances the unsettling effect of treating him throughout the play as though he were a mortal rapist. The light imagery is then recalled, as Creousa, in describing her decision to tell her story, uses the metaphor of bringing it from darkness into light (*πῶς δὲ σκοτίας ἀναφάνω*, 860, *πρὸς τάνδ' αὐγὰν αὐδάσω*, 886, *ἐς φῶς αὐδὰν καρύξω*, 911). The light, which normally represents beauty and knowledge, is here used to stand for the revelation of his crime.

Paian and religion

In *Ion* as with *Oedipus Tyrannus*, we find the *paian* is used to embody and explore traditional religious beliefs, and to depict the difficulties of applying such belief to the tragic world. Both Ion and Creousa use paeanic language to express their initial and opposing beliefs about Apollo: Ion sees him as perfectly good, and uses the *topoi* of the *paian* to encapsulate this, while Creousa sees him as wholly wicked, and redeploys the *paian* to subvert its normal associations. Over the course of the play, we are shown that both characters are too simplistic in their view, and both learn to take a more nuanced approach.⁹⁴ Ion is initially appalled to learn that a god can rape a mortal woman, and his horror derives from his starting premiss that the gods are perfect. By the end of the play, however, he has come to accept that such things happen, and to see Apollo as less pure and more pragmatic than he had believed. He learns to see Apollo's mortal love-affair as a source of honour for himself, rather than a slur on the god's good name (*ὥς ἐρεῖς τι κεδνὸν εὐτυχές τέ μοι*, 'how you are telling me of joyful good fortune', 1485), and to see the false oracle as a clever solution to a problematic situation, rather than a religious impossibility (*εὐεργετῶν σε Λοξίας ἐς εὐγενή / δόμον καθίζει*, 'Loxias acts as your benefactor by establishing you in a noble house', 1540–1). Conversely, Creousa begins the play by claiming that Apollo cannot make up for the crimes of the past and that

⁹⁴ Cf. Barlow (1971) 50: 'Apollo must be not only as Creousa sees him, but as Ion sees him and the chorus sees him. To take only one of these views as the truth is like believing Ophelia's mad scene contains the only real clue to Hamlet's character.'

even if he were to attempt to do so by giving her a child, he would still not be 'entirely dear' to her (*ἅπας μὲν οὐ γένοιτ' ἂν εἰς ἡμᾶς φίλος*, 427). Yet contrary to her own prediction, she abandons her anger with the god when she is reunited with Ion and instead expresses her gratitude: *αἰνῶ Φοῖβον οὐκ αἰνοῦσα πρίν* ('I praise Phoebus, though I did not praise him before', 1609). The Apollo of the play is neither the perfect being of Ion's monody nor the wicked monster of Creousa's. By following the two characters and their developing understanding of the nature of Apollo, the audience too is encouraged to come to this more balanced conclusion.⁹⁵

Despite the paeanic overtones, the picture of Apollo we are left with at the end of the play is still not that of Ion's opening *paian*, and Apollo's reluctance to face Ion and Creousa in person suggests an acknowledgement of his failings (albeit a humorous one, for it is hardly conventional for a powerful god to be ashamed of facing a woman and an adolescent boy).⁹⁶ As in *OT*, the paeanic language is used to negotiate different sets of beliefs about the gods and to help guide the audience towards a conclusion. Ion's opening *paian* casts Apollo in a mould typical of religious song in its unbridled praise of the god and its confidence in his goodness. We are immediately faced with the prospect that such a view of the god cannot work in the Euripidean world, where the gods are frequently capricious, selfish, and partisan in mortal affairs. When Ion criticizes Apollo's behaviour, we are reminded of the disparity between cultic and literary presentations of the gods which we know to have disturbed intellectuals like Plato.⁹⁷ Just as Plato quotes passages from tragedy and epic to highlight how they fall short of religious expectations, so Euripides alludes to the religious genre of the *paian* to set its associations against the flawed world of the play. Yet the play ultimately affirms neither the paeanic nor the tragic world-view. Apollo's refusal to appear at the end of the play stands in contrast with the usual gods of tragedy and epic, who affirm their power and the gulf between

⁹⁵ Cf. Lloyd (1986a) 36; Swift (2008) 40–7.

⁹⁶ Similarly Castor criticizes Apollo's judgement at the end of Eur. *El.*, and juxtaposes Apollo's traditional power and wisdom with his bad advice to Orestes (1245–6).

⁹⁷ e.g. Pl. *Euth.* 5e2–6a5, *Rep.* 2.377e–391e. Aristoph. *Clouds* 889–1104 parodies this kind of intellectual argument.

them and mortal men. Merely by admitting his guilt, Apollo acts differently from the conventional behaviour of tragic gods. We might compare Dionysus' behaviour at the end of *Bacchae*, where he feels no anxiety about confronting the mortals he has harmed, and indeed confidently rejects Cadmus' complaints that his behaviour is unjust (1346–9).⁹⁸ Apollo's attitude indicates that he, as well as the mortal characters, buys into the idea espoused by intellectuals such as Plato that gods and mortals should be judged by the same standards. Yet the play as a whole demonstrates the absurdity of this premiss by repeatedly demonstrating the way that it undercuts the expectations of myth. Thus, the incongruity of Creousa's situation is highlighted by Ion's astonishment that a woman who had intercourse with a god could suffer as a result (τί χρῆμα δράσας, εἰ θεῶ συνέζυγη; 343), while the Chorus assert that the children of divine affairs are always unlucky, overturning the usual assumption that divine birth is a source of pride (οὐτ' ἐπὶ κερκίσιν οὔτε λόγων φάτιν / ἄιον εὐτυχίας μετέχειν θεόθεν τέκνα θνατοῖς, 506–7).⁹⁹ Similarly whereas heroic myth frequently describes the acquisition of a mortal foster-father for a divine pregnancy, here we see a powerful god forced to sneak around behind the back of a cuckolded husband.¹⁰⁰ Thus throughout the play we find a confusion over the true nature of the gods, and a deliberate overturning of the conventions both of religious poetry and of tragedy.

The allusions to the *paian* feed into this theme for, as we have seen, they evoke a particular view of Apollo, set up by Ion at the start of the play and couched in the language of religious tradition. Over the course of the play, we see a steady deconstruction of this view of the god, and the relevance of the *paian* to the changing view of Apollo is

⁹⁸ As Lefkowitz (1989) notes, Euripidean characters who expect the gods to abide by mortal standards usually turn out to be misguided.

⁹⁹ e.g. Achilles lists his divine parentage as one of the reasons for his superiority at Hom. *Il.* 21.108–9. Both Owen (1939) and Lee (1997) comment on the Chorus's departure from tradition.

¹⁰⁰ Creousa makes it clear at 1539–45 that Xouthos would not adopt Ion if he knew he was Apollo's son rather than his own. This justifies the continuing deception of Xouthos at the end of the play, but it is once again an artificial problem, for being the foster-parent to a semi-divine child is usually presented as a source of honour rather than embarrassment. Conversely, Amphytrion in Eur. *Her.* criticizes Zeus not for fathering a mortal child but for failing to take adequate care of him (339–47).

recalled by the genre's incorporation into Creousa's monody. At the end of the play, however, paeanic language is subtly reintroduced as Creousa uses imagery of light and brightness to articulate the effects of the reconciliation. She describes Ion himself as brighter to her than the sun (*κρεῖσσον ἡλίου*, 1439), and directly addresses the light as representative of her happiness (*ὦ ὦ λαμπρᾶς αἰθέρος ἀμπτυχαί*, 1445). The play's overall movement is portrayed as a movement from darkness to light:

ὃ τε γηγενέας δόμος οὐκέτι νύκτα δέρκεται,
ἀελίου δ' ἀναβλέπει λαμπάσιν. (1466–7)

The earth-born house no longer sees the night, but looks at the beams of the sun.

While not explicitly paeanic, the light imagery here recalls the similar clustering of such imagery in both monodies, and the traditional ideas which it evoked on those occasions. Thus the paeanic healing which Apollo had failed to provide is finally granted, and Creousa redeploys the imagery she uses of Apollo in order to indicate the shift in her attitude. Accordingly, we see a realignment of the *paian*, to express the play's joyful ending. Despite Apollo's imperfections, we are reminded that he is nevertheless well-intentioned toward the human characters. Hence the *paian* can be reinstated as an indicator of the divine, for the play ultimately affirms the divine plan as not only benefiting Ion and Creousa but also providing a glorious future for Athens.¹⁰¹ Thus the paeanic imagery at the end reminds us of the limitations of mortal knowledge, for the suffering that Ion and Creousa have undergone was ultimately for the greater good, leading as it does to the future Athenian empire (1573–94). The ending of the

¹⁰¹ Some modern scholars feel reluctant to accept the upbeat tone of the ending and claim that the play encourages us to question whether the outcome is really so simple: cf. Loraux (1993) 209–10; Rabinowitz (1993) 219–22; Arnott (1996) 110–11. Such a reading of the play, however, relies on disregarding the explicitly stated attitude of the play's characters (in particular Creousa, who makes it clear that she now regards her grievance with Apollo as a thing of the past) and on imposing modern attitudes towards (e.g.) sexual abuse and empire on the fifth century. We should not fall into the trap of assuming that an 'ironic' or 'subversive' ending somehow leads to a better or deeper play and so seek to find one at all costs: see Swift (2008) 94–100.

play provides a connection between the apparently distinct portrayals of the gods in tragedy and in cult. By stressing the fallibility of mortal perceptions of the gods, *Ion* raises the possibility that the gods can be both cruel and kind, and hence points to a way that the *paian* can operate within a tragic world.

Conclusion

From our initial survey of the way a lyric genre is used in tragedy we can draw some general conclusions. First, the allusions to lyric genres we have seen thus far have tended to be imagistic or thematic, or to involve common motifs, rather than being specific references to particular lyric poems. What we see is play on the generally recognized features of the genre, rather than detailed allusion to specific performances or to literary works. The reference is aimed at triggering a general mood among as much of the audience as possible, rather than to appeal to or flatter the learning of a small subsection.

As we might expect, allusions to lyric are at their densest in lyric passages. The tragic chorus is easily able to evoke other choral forms, because of the parallels between tragic and non-tragic lyric, which mean that allusions to other genres can be easily fitted in. Choral passages act as bridges between the world of the audience and the world of the play, and so form obvious points for 'real life' choral forms to enter the play.¹⁰² But references to the genre are also scattered in the iambic sections of the play, reminding us of the relevance of the genre by a piece of imagery or a significant word. These allusions may be less rich, but structurally they play an important role, reinforcing the sense that the relevance of the genre permeates the play as a whole. In both cases, the allusions are first introduced near the start of the play, thus alerting the audience at an early stage to the idea that the genre may be relevant.

The *paian* plays an important role in the thematic unity of each play. In *Oedipus Tyrannus*, references to paeanic performance frame the play, and these references have a structural function. The *paian* of

¹⁰² For choral self-reflexivity as a mechanism for tragedy to reflect on its own nature, see Henrichs (1995); Goldhill (1986) 244–64.

the *parodos* introduces us to the plague-struck city, while the paeanic language in the third stasimon points us back to the *parodos* and anticipates the discovery which will lead to the purification of Thebes. In *Ion*, the two monodies make use of paeanic imagery to enhance the contrast between the two songs, and to express the respective soloists' attitudes towards Apollo. However, in both cases, the structural function of the *paian* is only one way in which the imagery underpins the play.

The allusions to *paian* that we have seen in these two plays use the themes of the genre to relate to and enhance the themes of the play. The ideas of protection and healing inherent in the *paian* become relevant to the situation in Thebes, where the need to purify the city drives the action of the play. In addition, the use of the *paian* draws on wider traditions of which the audience is aware. The significance of the *paian* is strengthened by the importance of Apollo to both plays; using the genre relies on the audience's awareness of the presentation of Apollo in *paian*. Thus the impact created by evoking the genre is dependent on the fact that the audience recognizes the associations which particular genres carry.

Finally, the use of the genre carries wider cultural implications. Evoking paeanic Apollo means drawing on a set of values and beliefs about the gods. Incorporating this set of beliefs into a tragic context (where a different set of norms operates) creates a mismatch between the two religious outlooks, and the dramatist uses this conflict to explore the nature of the gods. Using *paianes* at all is an effective strategy to highlight the tension between non-tragic and tragic religious views. In addition, however, the way that Sophocles and Euripides use *paian* imagery develops this tension, and encourages us to link it in with the action of the play. In *Oedipus Tyrannus* the concepts of healing and purification, which are inherent to the *paian*, initially seem simple but turn out to carry different meanings and to bring about unforeseen consequences. The nature of divine justice as revealed by the play's ending leaves unresolved questions in the minds of the audience. In *Ion* likewise, the religious feelings usually expressed by the *paian* are used to explore and challenge Apollo's behaviour in the play.

This unsettling presentation of the gods is common in tragedy, and could even be called conventional. However, the presence of the

paian in these plays forces a more overt recognition that it is not the same as how the gods are talked about in the world of religious poetry and song. We should therefore see the tragedians' choice of *paian* imagery as a deliberate attempt to highlight the disparity between these two outlooks. Cruel and kind gods coexisted in the minds of the Athenian audience. As Robert Parker suggests, this apparent incompatibility may in fact be a corrective to the problems presented by either one of the two sets of beliefs, and a way of resolving the fact that the gods' alleged beneficence is not always apparent.¹⁰³ But we are not normally forced to confront these differences directly. What we expect to be shown in tragedy is not the same as what we expect in state religion, and thus we can hold a variety of separate beliefs. In the tragedies discussed here, however, *paianes* are used as a link between these two worlds, and a challenge for their audience to face them both simultaneously.

¹⁰³ R. Parker (1997) 159.

4

Epinikion

The victory-odes of Pindar and Bacchylides are the genre of lyric poetry with which we as modern readers are most familiar, and where we feel most comfortable isolating *topoi* and other identifying features. Moreover, the importance of athletics in Greek life and culture means that athletic (and more specifically epinician) imagery is a potentially rich seam for the tragedians. Because our understanding of *epinikion* is considerably more secure than for other lyric genres, examining the genre gives us an excellent vantage-point from which to observe the richness of the interface between lyric and tragedy. However, looking for *epinikion* in tragedy also raises questions and problems specific to the genre: in particular, it is unclear how well known epinician poetry would have been by the mid- to late fifth century in Athens, a city generally thought to be ideologically opposed to the values embodied in *epinikion*. This chapter will therefore begin by exploring issues of performance and politics, to assess how *epinikion* might have been regarded by a tragic audience. In the second part of the chapter, I will discuss the uses the tragedians make of epinician imagery, with a focus on two plays where it is used to striking effect: Euripides' *Heracles* and *Electra*.

THE GENRE

When dealing with *epinikion*, we have two great advantages over other lyric genres: a large number of surviving texts, and a clear performance function. Even linguistically, we are on relatively safe

ground: the word *ἐπινίκιον* to describe an athletic praise-song is original terminology, used by both Pindar and Bacchylides to describe songs like the ones they were composing, even if it was not the only term used.¹ Though scholars dispute specific details of performance, the function and context of such songs is easy to identify: they were composed for individual victors to commemorate their success in athletic competitions. Moreover, because we have relatively many *epinikia*, we have a solid basis for identifying common themes and motifs. Since much has been written on the *topoi* and other defining features of *epinikion*, a lengthy discussion here seems otiose, and I will instead discuss parallels and allusions where they occur in the tragic passages I examine.²

For the purposes of this book I make the following assumptions about the way that *epinikion* was standardly performed:³

1. It was performed by a chorus (although subsequent reperformance may well have been monodic).⁴
2. It was usually performed in the victor's own *polis* (though some shorter odes seem to have been performed at the site of the games).⁵
3. It was conceptualized as being of public and civic importance: many odes were performed in public spaces such as sanctuaries, but even those which are believed to have been performed at a private house contained public elements.⁶

¹ Pind. *Nem.* 4.78; Bacchyl. 2.13: for terminology see also Hutchinson (2001) 364.

² A *topoi*-centred approach was first set out by Bundy (1962), and is the methodology continued by most subsequent scholars: see, for example, Young (1968); (1971); Carey (1980); Miller (1981). For a more contextually driven approach, see Kurke (1991) and Hornblower (2004) 28–33.

³ See Currie (2005) 16–18; Hornblower (2004) 33–6. For reperformance, see Hubbard (2004); Morrison (2007) 11–19.

⁴ For the choral vs. monody debate, see Burnett (1989); Carey (1989); (1991) (who argue for choral performance); Davies (1988); Heath (1988); Heath and Lefkowitz (1991) (who advocate solo performance).

⁵ e.g. Pind. *Ol.* 8, 11; Bacchyl. 2: see Hutchinson (2001) 363–4; Currie (2005) 17.

⁶ Currie (2005) 17–18 lists internal evidence for various performance settings, for performance at a sanctuary or public festival, he gives Pind. *Ol.* 3.39–41, 14.1–4, *Pyth.* 5.24, 77–81, 11.1–8, *Nem.* 4.35, 5.53, 10.22–3, 11.1–3, *Isth.* 4.61–6. For performance at the victor's house, see Pind. *Ol.* 1.10, *Nem.* 1.19–20, *Isth.* 8.2; Bacchyl. 6.14. The distinction between 'public' and 'private' poetry is not always a helpful one, but *epinikion*, regardless of its actual performance location, regularly demonstrates interest in the city and the citizens rather than only in the *laudandus* or his aristocratic group.

As with any poetic form, these 'rules' are flexible conventions, not binding, and not perceived as rules by the Greeks themselves. However, *epinikion*'s focus on its community is important for understanding the associations which the genre would trigger in the minds of an ancient audience.

EPINIKION AND ATHENS

One of the core suppositions of this book is that lyric genres carry their own set of associations, and exploring these is essential to our understanding of how this poetry is deployed in tragedy. But unlike other choral genres, the cultural connotations of *epinikion* have an intrinsic political loading. *Epinikion* celebrates a certain type of lifestyle and values, which are at odds with the ideology inherent to a democratic *polis* (see pp. 55–60 above for a discussion of tragedy and democracy). When we observe that a tragedian has chosen to evoke *epinikion*, therefore, it raises the question of whether this type of allusion contains political overtones. Does *epinikion* carry aristocratic connotations which would have been overt to a fifth-century Athenian theatre audience, and if so, should these connotations affect our reading of the play?

Presenting the issue like this raises two interlinked questions. Firstly, how monolithic was the value-system of democratic Athens? And secondly, how 'aristocratic' is the world-view set out in *epinikia*? To some extent this issue is connected to how elite material is handled in Athens in general: we have already seen (Chapter 2) that while aristocratic values are sometimes regarded with anxiety, the *polis* generally tries to assimilate elite culture rather than rejecting it. Given what we have seen of the treatment of sympotic poetry in general, it would be simplistic to assume that epinician performance would automatically have been seen as a rejection of the values of the *polis*. Nonetheless, *epinikion* is not just another segment of elite poetic culture; by its nature it runs counter to democratic ideals in a way that other lyric genres do not. A form of poetry whose purpose is to celebrate the deeds of an individual aristocrat does not sit easily with fifth-century Athenian ideology, and so it is striking to

find epinician language in a form of poetry performed for a mass public audience. We must therefore examine the evidence for *epinikion* in Athens in more detail, for it is necessary to consider the associations which the genre carried before we can analyse its use in any particular play.

The traditional view of *epinikion* in Athens stresses the incompatibility between the values espoused by *epinikion* and the democratic ethos. Scholars note that Pindar was not commissioned to compose *epinikia* for Athenians after the radicalization of the democracy, and argue that his poetry suggests hostility towards Athens, or at least concern about what it represented.⁷ Hornblower, however, gathers together the evidence for Pindar's compositions for Athenians, including fragmentary evidence for an *epinikion* composed for an Athenian ephebe at the Oschophoria, a local Athenian festival.⁸ He also notes that *Nemean* 2, one of the two surviving Pindaric *epinikia* for Athenian victors, is not datable, and therefore we cannot assume that it pre-dates the radical democracy.⁹ This of course is not in itself an argument for acceptance of *epinikion* in Athens, but it is worth noting that statements such as 'it may be significant that the last datable epinician for an Athenian . . . is as old as 486'¹⁰ somewhat beg the question, and say more about our own beliefs about Athenian society than our knowledge of Pindaric performance.

Pindar may have only composed two odes for Athenian victors, but this is not disproportionate compared to the number of odes composed for other cities. Corinth and Argos only receive one ode each, while Sparta has none; in fact the only mainland Greek city which commissioned Pindar to write more than two odes is his native Thebes. Other than Aegina (clearly a special case) the biggest group of cities which employed Pindar consists of Western Greek *poleis*. This becomes still more statistically significant once we take

⁷ For the traditional view on Pindar and Athens, see Wade-Gery (1958) 247–52; Bowra (1953) 25–6; Segal (1986) 124.

⁸ Hornblower (2004) 252–4. The poem itself is Pindar fr. 6c, and is also mentioned by Aristodemos of Thebes (*FGrHist* 328 F 14–16 302 and nn. 177 and 179).

⁹ Hornblower (2004) 42–3, 248 n. 468. Hornblower's discussion of Pindar on Athens also cites Pindar's *thrēnos* for Hippocrates (fr. 137), and his naming of two Athenian trainers, Melesias and Menandros (251–2).

¹⁰ Golden (1998) 86.

into account that it is mainland Greek cities which formed the biggest group of victors at the crown games.¹¹ We can speculate as to the reasons for this: perhaps *epinikion* as a genre was more popular in the West, or possibly Pindar himself had better connections there than in mainland Greece. Colonies were more conservative than mainland Greek cities, and keen to create links to a shared Greek culture and experience, which may also explain the preservation of a tradition which was less important in their mother cities. But the fact remains that Pindar's engagement with Athens is in line with his handling of other mainland cities of comparable size and status. Our knowledge of Bacchylides is more fragmentary, but the surviving poems tell a similar story. Bacchylides was regularly commissioned for Cean victors, and he also had links with Thessaly (14, 14B), yet of the surviving poems four are composed for Western *poleis*, and two for Aegina. Indeed, Bacchylides also composed an *epinikion* for an Athenian victor (10), which further suggests that the distribution of *epinikia* owes more to factors such as geography and personal connections than to politics.

The statement that Pindar wrote no *epinikia* for Athenians after the 460s is less significant when we recall that the last datable *epinikion* for any *polis* was composed in 446. Other poets composed *epinikia* between the mid-sixth and mid-fifth centuries, but after Pindar's death we know of nothing until the one-off *epinikion* for Alcibiades. Insofar as we can tell, the genre as a whole (or at least new compositions) seems to go out of fashion. Indeed, the comic poet Eupolis explicitly states that Pindar was no longer sung in his day because of a general decline in taste (*ὕπὸ τῆς τῶν πολλῶν ἀφιλοκαλίας*, fr. 398 K–A), which suggests firstly that Pindar had been sung in Athens in previous generations, and secondly that the poetry was not considered politically dubious as much as old-fashioned.

The practice of commemorating victory by praise-song seems to have died out and was replaced by victory-statues dedicated in the victor's home town or at the Panhellenic site, along with an accompanying epigram. For a while, however, the various forms of victory-memorial existed simultaneously, and the opening of *Nemean* 5

¹¹ See Golden (1998) 36 for statistics on the geographical distribution of victors.

suggests a rivalry between them, as Pindar stresses the merits of his own method of celebration and contrasts the immovability of victory-statues with the lasting fame of a song.¹² The development of victory-memorials (including *epinikia*) in the sixth century can be linked to changes in the political culture of Greek *poleis*. Changes in the nature of warfare and a growth in trade had led to political power shifting beyond the old aristocratic families.¹³ As the opinions of the wider community became more important, aristocrats were increasingly under pressure to restrain their consumption (for example, by sumptuary laws), and needed to justify their power both to their own group and to the community as a whole.¹⁴ The ideology of *epinikion* can be explained in terms of this political agenda: victory-songs strive to present the victory as a civic good, whilst simultaneously glorifying the victor.¹⁵ Golden suggests that the disappearance of *epinikion* can be explained by the widening of political participation during the fifth century (even in non-democratic *poleis*), which made the motivations underlying epinician performance outdated. However, other forms of victory-memorial seem to have been operating by the same basic rationale; indeed the same set of issues seems to have accumulated around victory-statues, since we are told of laws regulating their size and use.¹⁶ Perhaps *epinikia* were nevertheless felt to be too heavy-handed a strategy in a fifth-century *polis*. However, it would make as much sense to see the change as a shift in fashion rather than a suggestion that the politicized nature of victory was lessened in a system where the aristocrats held less power.

¹² Οὐκ ἀνδριαντοποιός εἰμ', ὥστ' ἐλινύσοντα ἐργάζεσθαι ἀγάλματ' ἐπ' αὐτᾶς βαθυΐδος / ἑσταότ' ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πάσας ὀλκάδος ἔν τ' ἀκάτῳ, γλυκεῖ' ἀοιδά, / στεῖχ' ἀπ' Αἰγίνας διαγγέλλουσ': 'I am no maker of statues, to fashion sculptures that stand still, resting on the same base. No, sweet song, go from Aegina in every trading-boat and dinghy, to announce . . .': see Steiner (1998) on Pindar's use of statue-imagery.

¹³ It used to be a commonplace that hoplite warfare brought about political change: see Andrewes (1956) 34–8; Forrest (1966) 88–97. However, more recent scholarship has challenged the chronological evidence: see Morris (2000) 161–2 for an overview and bibliography.

¹⁴ See Morris (2000) 113–91.

¹⁵ Golden (1998) 84–5.

¹⁶ See Nicholson (2005) 16 on the underlying similarities between different forms of victory-memorials. Pliny, *NH* 34.9.16 tells us that only people who had won three times were allowed to be represented by portrait-statues at Olympia. Luc. *Pr. Im.* 11 tells us that such statues were not allowed to be larger than life-sized.

Another reason to be cautious of claiming that *epinikion* was problematic for the democracy is that we know that Athenian victors were honoured by the *polis* in other ways. It is fair to say that Athenian victors were on the whole honoured less extravagantly than victors from other *poleis*: for example Athenian victors did not have statues erected for them in the *agora*.¹⁷ Nevertheless, victors were entitled to meals at public expense in the *prytaneion*, as we learn from the Prytaneion Decree, an Attic inscription dating to the 430s (*IG I³ 131*), as well as from Socrates' sarcastic comment in Plato's *Apology* that the same treatment should be awarded to him (*Apol.* 36d).¹⁸ We also have evidence that Athenian victors (at least at Olympia and Isthmia) were given cash bonuses on their return home.¹⁹ The honouring of athletic victors was enough of a commonplace for a late fifth- or early fourth-century writer like Thucydides to refer to it in proverbial terms (Thuc. 4.121.1). The widespread admiration of athletes is also attested by a fragment from Euripides' *Autolykus* (fr. 282 Kannicht) where the speaker presents athletes as useless and criticizes society for its excessive admiration of them. While this may also attest to an anti-athletic tradition, the argument is presented as a counter-cultural one: it is taken as read that the majority of people collude in the honouring of athletes, and it is this consensus that irritates the speaker. In fact, athletic success seems to be an exception to the normal rules that individual Athenians are not honoured publicly.²⁰ Athletics were funded by gymnasiarchs, whose role was comparable to that of the provider of any other liturgy, though the sums involved were smaller.²¹ To some extent, the fact

¹⁷ Cf. Currie (2005) 147–8.

¹⁸ The details of the Prytaneion Decree are much discussed: for an overview see Kyle (1987) 145–7.

¹⁹ Plut. *Sol.* 23.3, Diog. Laert. 1.55. This may, however, be a retrojection of later practice.

²⁰ For example, according to Aeschines successful generals after the Strymon victory were allowed to set up herms on the condition that their names were not inscribed on them, while Miltiades' request to be named in the depiction of Marathon in the Stoa Poikile was refused (Aeschin. 3.183–6). The funeral oration too suppresses the names of individuals in favour of generalized praise: cf. Thomas (1989) 213–21; Gribble (1999) 45–6.

²¹ For gymnasiarchies see the Old Oligarch 1.3; Xen. *Oec.* 2.5–7; Plut. *Nic.* 3.3. Plut. *Lys.* 21.4 tells us that the cost was less than that of a comic *chorēgos* (and

that the aristocrats were funding their own entertainment may have lessened any anti-athletic pressure; nevertheless, treating the funding of athletics as a liturgy buys into the idea that it is a service to the community as a whole.²²

There is of course a difference between commissioning a poem to honour oneself and receiving honour from the *polis*, and hence *epinikion* can still be seen as more problematic than other forms of celebration. However, receiving an *epinikion* is not a private event either, as is shown by the emphasis that the surviving poems place on the community. *Epinikia* frequently contain morals about civic life, and the importance of avoiding pride. Their narrative elements are often designed to honour the *polis* as a whole rather than simply the *laudandus*: as in, for example, the use of foundation-myths, or the telling of important local stories. Thus when *epinikia* present the achievements of the *laudandus* as beneficial to the community, it seems reasonable to infer that this was designed to appeal to the wider audience.²³ Traditions such as the one that *Olympian* 7 was inscribed on the temple of Athene Lindia also indicate that an epinician ode could be conceptualized as a possession of the *polis*.²⁴ Separating *epinikia* too far from other forms of public honour therefore seems rather artificial. Individual praise was potentially problematic in any Greek city: hence the frequency of warning-motifs and morals about *phthonos* in *epinikia*. A victory ode constitutes a particularly direct (and therefore risky) form of praise, and this may well have made performance in Athens more awkward than elsewhere. Nevertheless, despite Athenian concerns about successful individuals, athletic achievement seems to have been viewed as something of a special case.

considerably less than the cost of funding a dithyrambic chorus). On the total number of liturgies in Athens, see Davies (1967).

²² The value of prizes awarded by the city at the Panathenaia might suggest that honouring athletes played a civic role. However, since the prizes mainly went to non-Athenians, enhancing the prestige of Athens and the games, we can see this as the *polis* using athletics to glorify itself, rather than saying much about the attitude of the democratic city towards its own victors: see Kyle (1996).

²³ Crotty (1982) esp. ch. 2; Kurke (1991).

²⁴ We know of this story from a scholion to *Ol.* 7; the scholiast himself cites Gorgon, a historian also cited by the compilers of the Lindos Chronicle (*FGrHist* 515 F 18).

None of this is to suggest that it was standard practice to compose or perform new *epinikia* in Athens for Athenian victors. The general decline of *epinikion* across Greece in the second half of the fifth century, combined with the particular issues in democratic Athens, makes this most unlikely. However, we do have evidence that *epinikia* were reperformed in Athens, and that a relatively large section of Athenian society would have been familiar with the genre. When Strepsiades in *Clouds* calls for a piece of *epinikion* to be recited at his symposium, he not only suggests a particular piece, but also names it in an allusive manner:

πρῶτον μὲν αὐτὸν τὴν λύραν λαβόντ' ἐγὼ 'κέλευσα
ῥῆσαι Σιμωνίδου μέλος, τὸν Κριόν, ὡς ἐπέχθη. (1354–5)

First I told him to take the lyre and sing a Simonides song—how Crius got fleeced.

The scene relies on a significant fraction of the audience recognizing a particular epinician ode (fr. 507 PMG). Indeed, Aristophanes' paraphrase is verbally very similar to the epinician passage (ἐπέξαθ' ὁ Κριὸς οὐκ ἀεικέως / ἔλθων ἐς εὐδενδρον ἀγλαὸν Διός). Whilst it is possible that the pun on Crius' name made this ode a particularly memorable one, the level of familiarity with epinician repertoire is nonetheless striking. Whether or not the audience know the ode by heart, they are at least expected to realize that this is an allusion to a well-known piece of *epinikion*, and to recognize it simply from the name of the victor. Moreover (as discussed in Chapter 2), Strepsiades' desire for *epinikion* is not presented as elitist, but rather as a traditional form of entertainment, in contrast to the shocking passage of Euripides chosen by Pheidippides (1370–3). Indeed, performance of Simonides is aligned with that of Aeschylus (1364–5), thus undermining any suggestion that epinician performance in this context is intended as un-Athenian.

At *Birds* 924–30 we find further references to Pindaric poetry, when the Poet, attempting to prove his worth to the new city, sings a song modelled on a fragment of Pindar addressed to Hieron of Syracuse (fr. 105a S–M):

Ἀλλὰ τις ὠκεῖα Μουσάων φάτις
οἰάπερ ἱππων ἀμαρυνά.

σὺ δὲ πάτερ, κτίστορ Αἴτνας,
 ζαθέων ἱερῶν ὁμώνυμε,
 δὸς ἐμὴν ὅ τι περ
 τεῇ κεφαλῇ θέλεις
 πρόφρων δόμεν † ἐμὴν τεῖν.†. (924–30)

The word of the Muses is swift, like the twinkling of horses' feet. You, father, founder of Aetna, who give your name to holy sanctuaries, give me whatever you kindly want to grant me with your nod.

Here we find another quotation from Pindar: lines 926–7 are virtually identical to the second and third lines of the Pindaric fragment, but in reversed order (ζαθέων ἱερῶν ἐπώνυμε / πάτερ, κτίστορ Αἴτνας in Pindar). A little later in the scene, the Poet again quotes from the same poem (σύνες ὅ τοι λέγω = *Birds* 945; Pind. fr. 105a.1 S–M). The audience is expected to know that Pindar was involved in celebrating the foundation of Aetna in 476/5, and to understand the scene as parodying the roles poets could play in city-foundations. Hieron is not named directly; the audience is expected to infer his presence from the allusive pun on his name at 927, which again suggests familiarity with Pindar and his patrons. Moreover, the opening lines of the passage evoke *epinikion* more directly, perhaps reminding the audience of the athletic odes Pindar composed for Hieron. The Poet's opening claim (ὠκέλα Μουσάων φάτις) is reminiscent of how Pindar highlights his own role as a guarantor of his patron's future reputation, while the description of the horses' feet evokes equestrian competitions more directly (and perhaps Hieron's horse Pherenicus, the subject of several odes).²⁵ These epinician allusions come in the context of praise of the city, as the Poet tells Peisthetaerus that his objective is to honour Nephelococcygia (904–6, 917). Thus the praise of Hieron is felt to be synonymous with the glorification of his city, and *epinikia* are portrayed as glorifying the community as a whole.

Evidence from Aristophanes therefore suggests that a relatively wide swath of an Athenian audience would have been familiar

²⁵ West (1968) 7 suggests that the opening lines of the passage should be understood as dactylo-epitrite sequence: d¹e-D-E, supplying <φλέγει> after ἀμαρυγά as the sentence's main verb. This metrical resonance would further strengthen the epinician associations.

enough with *epinikion* for jokes like these to be viable ones.²⁶ Both passages presuppose a fairly detailed knowledge of specific pieces of Pindar, as well as a more general awareness of epinician conventions. It seems unlikely that Aristophanes would risk a parody of this nature if *epinikia* were regarded with hostility by many fifth-century Athenians; again, this fits in with the aspirational attitude towards elite material in Athens. Moreover, the *Clouds* passage offers explicit testimony for one route by which *epinikia* were transmitted and reperformed in Athens: the symposium. However, Pheidippides is clearly supposed to have learned the *epinikion* on a prior occasion, and the play's focus on methods of education might suggest that learning lyric poetry (including *epinikia*) was a traditional part of schooling.²⁷ We should be cautious about taking too literally Eupolis' comments on the disappearance of Pindar from Athenian culture (fr. 398 K–A), as comedy tends to capitalize on its audience's feelings of nostalgia for a nobler age. The mere fact that the audience is expected to engage with this lament for old-fashioned lyric poetry in itself suggests a certain level of familiarity with it. A modern writer might similarly lament the lack of appreciation for Shakespeare in an age obsessed with soap operas, but it would be wrong to infer from this that most modern Britons were entirely unfamiliar with his work.

Epinician references in comedy (and indeed in tragedy) confirm a level of familiarity among a mass Athenian audience. The important question for our purposes is to what extent the political overtones of *epinikion* would have coloured Athenians' attitudes to hearing Pindar or Simonides. It seems likely that most of the time the effects would not have been very marked. A reperformed *epinikion* praises athletes from a different time and place, so any potential political overtones

²⁶ We also find parodies of other Pindaric passages at Aristoph. *Acharn.* 637–9 (Pindar's tribute to Athens in fr. 76 S–M, also quoted at *Knights* 1329), and *Knights* 1264–6 (Pind. fr. 89a S–M; the opening of a *prosodion*). Neither of these are epinician fragments, but their inclusion in comedy does suggest a broad awareness of Pindar and his oeuvre.

²⁷ As Hubbard (2004) 81 notes, the appearances of book-rolls in educational scenes in Attic vases (including a scene which depicts a boy singing a lyric piece: ARV² 838.27) suggests that books were circulated in schools by the mid-5th cent.: see also p. 43 above. For the transmission and reperformance of *epinikia*, see also Irigoin (1952) 8–21; Nagy (1990) 404–12; Carey (1995) 90; Currie (2004); Morrison (2007) 11–19.

are lessened. However, as with any aristocratic art-form, the political loading of *epinikion* remains present below the surface. We see this in particular with the one fifth-century *epinikion* we do know of for an Athenian victor: the *epinikion* for Alcibiades.

The Alcibiades *epinikion*

Alcibiades' behaviour at the Olympics of 416 was a political gesture, designed to enhance his prestige in the city at a critical point in his career. His entry of seven chariots in the race was in itself an unparalleled feat involving expenditure on a vast scale. It was also accompanied by a lavish display of self-aggrandizement, which Thucydides makes Alcibiades refer to as 'other arrangements in a style appropriate to my victory' (6.16.2), and which pseudo-Andocides describes in detail and attacks ([And]. 4.29–30). Pseudo-Andocides regards Alcibiades' actions as an attack on Athens as a whole, seeing it as signifying 'one man being more powerful than the whole city'. The chariot victories were also commemorated by an *epinikion*, ascribed to Euripides, of which we have the opening (PMG 775–6):

σέ δ' ἄγαμαι,
ὦ Κλεινίου παῖ· καλὸν ἄνικα,
κάλλιστον δ', ὃ μή τις ἄλλος Ἑλλάνων,
ἄρματι πρῶτα δραμεῖν καὶ δεύτερα καὶ τρίτα <τα>,
βῆναί τ' ἀπονητὶ Διὸς στεφθέντ' ἐλαίᾳ
κάρυκι βοᾶν παραδοῦναι.

I admire you, son of Cleinias. Victory is a fine thing, but it is finest to run first, second, and third in the chariot-race, which no other of the Greeks has ever done, and to come away unwearied and wreathed in the olive of Zeus, to provide the proclamation for the herald.

The poem is conventional in style: the address of the victor by his father's name, the priamel glorifying the importance of the achievement.²⁸ We also know of another theme of the poem, since according to the opening of Plutarch's *Demosthenes*, the poet says that *χρῆναι*

²⁸ The priamel is most famously used at the opening of Pind. *Ol.* 1, but is a common Pindaric device: see Race (1982) 73–81.

τῷ εὐδαίμονι πρῶτον ὑπάρξαι τὰν πόλιν εὐδόκιμον ('the successful man first of all needs a famous city'). We see here one of the central concerns of *epinikia*: the reconciliation of successful victor and community. If Plutarch is paraphrasing closely, rather than just interpreting a theme, the motif is deployed particularly forcefully. Gribble argues that this was the function of the poem: an attempt to re-incorporate Alcibiades into the *polis*, similar to his reintegration as victor after his return from exile.²⁹ If this was indeed the motivation for the composition, it suggests a striking level of self-consciousness about the integrative role *epinikion* can play.

We see these themes presented as a contemporary issue in Thucydides, where the chariot victories are brought up as a current issue in the debate between Alcibiades and Nicias. Nicias alludes to the victories, claiming that Alcibiades supports the Sicilian expedition because of his desire for wealth to maintain his stables. He goes on to suggest in more general terms that Alcibiades will endanger the state to maintain his own pre-eminence (6.12.2). In his response, Alcibiades raises the subject of the chariot victories more directly, and defends them in terms of civic benefit, arguing that his display of wealth and power reflects well on the city, and makes Athens appear strong to her enemies (6.16.2–3). Athleticism, and individual aristocratic achievement, is being debated here in overtly political terms. The defence which Thucydides attributes to Alcibiades is suggestive of the ethos expressed by his *epinikion*: an attempt to reconcile individual pre-eminence with the civic good, by incorporating the prestige earned by the individual into the reputation of the *polis*. Evidence from the orators suggests that this kind of debate took place elsewhere in democratic Athens, for Leocrates mentions the kind of defence Alcibiades uses in order to attack it: horse-racing, he says, should not be misconstrued as a service to the state like a trierarchy or a building project (Leoc. 139–40).³⁰ As Colin Macleod notes, Alcibiades' arguments recall ideas about the city raised by Pericles, but in each case the comparison serves to highlight Alcibiades'

²⁹ Gribble (1999) 66–7.

³⁰ Cf. also Dem. 18.320, where he contrasts his own patriotism with the self-serving attitudes of the horse-racing aristocrats.

egotism.³¹ Thus, for example, both Pericles and Alcibiades attempt to defend themselves from slurs made against them, and use similar language to do so, but whereas Alcibiades mentions his individual brilliance as a chariot-owner, Pericles instead emphasizes his patriotism and his incorruptibility (2.60.5–7). The contrast helps to alert the reader to what Thucydides believes to be problematic about Alcibiades' character and highlights how his claims to fit in with Athenian ideology ring false. Alcibiades' victory in the debate suggests that his rhetorical strategy was effective in this instance. Thucydides' narrative, however, demonstrates that in the longer term Alcibiades' tactics are misguided. Individual brilliance in Athens is not as easily subsumed as he hopes, and it is Athenian mistrust of Alcibiades' *παρανομία* which leads to his fall from grace (6.15.2–4).

In this context the *epinikion* can be read as a clever, but ultimately misjudged, gesture. Praise of an individual, and individual excess, is threatening to the democratic ethos even when expressed in terms that seek to smooth the issue over. The conventionality of the ode points to the epinician tradition, setting Alcibiades up in the same model as Pindar's victors. But it is one thing for an older piece of *epinikion* to be reperformed as a piece of art, and another for a contemporary Athenian citizen to be a recipient of a specially composed piece. In Alcibiades' *epinikion* we see the tensions that in practice surround the idea of *epinikia* as a force for integration. Thucydides' attribution of these arguments about individual greatness to Alcibiades, and the fact that he commissioned an *epinikion* at all, suggests a general awareness that victory-praise could play this civic role. However, the outcome shows how delicate such an endeavour was in a democratic *polis*.

Any poetry which is transmitted through elite institutions or activities is liable to carry political overtones in the eyes of a democratic audience. *Epinikion*, however, has the additional issue that it is also inherently elitist in its function and in the values it presents. I have stressed the importance of not overplaying these political echoes, or assuming that *epinikion* is automatically considered anti-Athenian. We have also seen that, contrary to what are perhaps our

³¹ Macleod (1975).

natural assumptions about individual brilliance in the democratic *polis*, praise of successful athletes was not inherently a problem. While *epinikion* itself was not performed in fifth-century Athens, athletes are marked out for praise in other ways; in fact athletes seem to be exempt from the normal rules that achievement is not praised in individual terms. However, the issues that surrounded Alcibiades' chariot victories demonstrate the fragility of this situation. Praise of individuals is still a fraught business, and even the normal exemption-rules for athletes can be strained when taken to extremes. Aristocratic behaviour conducted by an individual as excessive and contentious as Alcibiades is still more problematic. We can therefore assume that, while epinician allusions in tragedy need not be read as automatically politicized, a potential political issue lies beneath the surface. *Epinikion* in the *polis* may not be a problem *per se*, but it is not entirely straightforward. These political associations may become more thought-provoking when epinician *topoi* are presented in the context of a public art-form such as tragedy, and this political aspect is a further tool tragedians can deploy in their use of lyric material.

EPINIKION IN TRAGEDY

Tragedy contains a great deal of athletic imagery, which is not surprising given the importance that athletics held in the Greek world. Athletic competition was not only a familiar event in Greek life, but also one charged with personal and civic significance; as such it was a useful source of imagery for poets. Physical achievement was considered an important part of traditional male values. Thus when a poet uses language derived from the world of sport, he can also evoke this masculine world-view as a whole. However, in discussing how tragedy handles imagery from *epinikion*, it is important to note the distinction between athletic imagery in general and imagery which specifically alludes to epinician poetry. Separating the two categories is not as straightforward as it might at first seem, for whether a piece of imagery is 'epinician' or simply 'athletic' will depend on the wider context, as well as on the way imagery works in the play more generally. It would be stretching the point too far to claim that simply

comparing a character to an athlete evokes the norms of epinician song; however, if this comparison came in a play where *epinikion* had been evoked elsewhere, we might feel less reluctant to suggest that the piece of athletic imagery was also linked to this theme. Once *epinikion* has been 'triggered' the audience would have been more likely to interpret other athletic language in the play in the light of the genre; hence a free-standing piece of imagery can acquire more complex overtones than it contains in its own right. In practice, plays which make extensive use of athletic imagery frequently also evoke *epinikion*, and by doing this they enhance the meaning that this athletic imagery can convey.

Epinician and athletic language can be used in tragedy to achieve a range of functions. One of the more straightforward uses is to compare a non-athletic struggle to an athletic one. Whereas *paianes* tend to use this technique to achieve irony, in the case of *epinikion* the emotional impact may be less clear-cut. For example, when Medea describes the murder of her children in athletic terms (ἔρπεε πρὸς βαλβίδα λυπηρὰν βίου, 'creep to the starting-post of a miserable life', 1245), the effect is partly to stress the contrast between the glory of athletic endeavour and the horror of child-killing, but the athletic language might also recall the masculine aspects of Medea's nature, and so imply that it is traditional Greek values as much as female or barbarian ones which form the catalyst for the action.³² Thus athletic language can be used to symbolize a certain value-system, and using athletic imagery in a troubling context can be a way of questioning those values more broadly. Conversely, in *Agamemnon* the actions of the Achaean army are described with athletic language: the war itself becomes a wrestling-match (παλαίσματα, 63) while the army's return is the return-leg of a race (κάμψαι διαύλου θάτερον κῶλον πάλιν, 344). Yet it seems ambiguous as to whether this is simply a way of praising their physical endeavours, or whether it is again ironic, drawing on the audience's awareness of the dangers of sacking a city (μῆτ' εἴην πολυπύρθης, 'may I not be a sacker of cities', 472).

A technique more obviously related to *epinikion* itself is where the Chorus praise a character in language which evokes the conventions

³² On Medea's heroization see Friedrich (1993) 222; Allan (2002) 74–5.

of praise-poetry.³³ We sometimes find metrical resonance here too, as the tragedians can use dactylo-epitrite in conjunction with other epinician cues to alert their audience to the potential relevance of the genre. Thus, for example, in *Andromache*, Peleus is praised in epinician terms after his victory in debate over Menelaus (766–801).³⁴ Here, the epinician language and metre set up a humorous contrast between the youthful vigour associated with the genre and the elderly and frail Peleus, who wins by words rather than by deeds. However, the athletic overtones also convey a sincere form of praise, and acknowledge the role Peleus has played as Andromache's saviour and protector. Here the use of epinician imagery is not dissimilar to the passages in the *Iliad* where Nestor and Priam are given their own equivalent of an arming-scene (a detailed description of Nestor's cup: 11.628–41, and of Priam's ox-cart: 24.265–80). Whilst there is an element of humour, evoking a stock-scene for heroic behaviour indicates that the two old men are about to perform their own equivalent of an *aristeia*, and fulfil their most important role in the poem. Similarly, whilst Peleus may seem an unlikely athletic victor, praising him through the conventions of *epinikion* indicates the significance of his actions, and the warmth of the Chorus's feelings towards him.

The conventions of the genre can also be evoked by their absence or inversion, which can suggest a problematic relationship between the values inherent in the genre and the 'reality' we see on-stage. An example is the first stasimon of *Medea*, where the Chorus sing a praise-song of the female sex in dactylo-epitrite metre (410–45). Dactylo-epitrite is not an uncommon metre at this period, and taken in isolation we would not necessarily infer an epinician connection; however, the Chorus encourage us to do so by drawing on the epinician idea of the link between *aretē* and celebration in song (415–23). However, they also invert the norms of encomiastic song by conflating praise and blame-poetry, implying that their good reputation will be won by exposing the crimes of men (*μακρὸς δ' αἰὼν ἔχει / πολλὰ μὲν ἀμετέραν ἀνδρῶν τε μοῖραν εἰπεῖν*, 'the long ages

³³ For a similar technique in comedy, see Macleod (1981).

³⁴ See Allan (2000): 217–21; Carey (forthcoming).

have many things to say of man's lot as well as woman's', 429–30). Thus, the ode is presented simultaneously as a praise-song and as a piece of lyric invective, conflating two genres which are usually felt to be thematically opposite and metrically distinct. The Chorus's misunderstanding of praise-poetry in an ode which resembles an epinician song highlights the broader level on which they are misguided, for the purpose of the first stasimon is to emphasize the degree to which the Chorus have been overwhelmed by Medea's arguments, and to explain their decision to keep her murderous plans a secret. This misplaced *epinikion* ties in with the athletic language elsewhere in the play: just as the Chorus's attempt to sing an *epinikion* turns out to be flawed, so too the presentation of Medea's revenge as heroic activity highlights the true horror of her actions.

Epinician imagery is widespread in tragedy, and associated with themes of athleticism, physical vigour, and praise. The two plays I have chosen to examine in detail, however, use *epinikion* in a way which goes beyond this, partly because the themes of *epinikion* are particularly relevant to their central concerns, and partly because they feature a protagonist who is himself connected with athleticism. I will first explore Euripides' *Heracles*, and look at Heracles' role in *epinikion* as Olympic founder. Secondly I will discuss Euripides' *Electra*, and investigate the tradition of presenting Orestes as an athletic victor. I will also look briefly at other plays which use athletic imagery in the presentation of these two heroes: Sophocles' *Trachiniae* and Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Electra* and Euripides' *Orestes*. Euripides' *Heracles* and *Electra* both contain marked athletic language, as well as more specific references to *epinikion* in choral passages. In both, the epinician imagery is used to emphasize important themes in the play, and to compare these to the values of *epinikion*.

HERACLES

The presence of epinician language in *Heracles* has long been recognized, for in 1965 Hugh Parry argued that it was central to interpreting

the second stasimon.³⁵ Rejecting previous readings that saw the ode as lacking unity or a thematic connection to the play, Parry suggested that the ode is best understood through the conventions of encomiastic poetry, and in particular he highlighted similarities to the language and themes of *epinikion*. The second stasimon fits into a pattern of praise for Heracles, which builds up throughout the play. This praise climaxes in the exuberant third stasimon, which immediately precedes the hero's fall and acts as a foil for the change in tone as Heracles' *aretē* is turned against the people it should most protect.³⁶

Commentators on *Heracles* have generally accepted Parry's argument.³⁷ But although most scholars agree that the theme of praise links the play's three stasima, none has looked in detail at the other two odes' connection to the language of praise poetry. In fact, as I shall argue in this section, epinician imagery runs throughout *Heracles*, and is far from being limited to a single choral ode. The broader themes of *epinikion* are relevant to the themes of *Heracles*, and the build-up of epinician language and ideas throughout the play strengthens and enriches this connection. Part of this wider significance is the contrast it sets up between the Heracles of *epinikion* and the Heracles of tragedy. As we shall see, Heracles himself is a figure familiar to the audience from both genres, because of his associations with the origins of *epinikion*. The Heracles of Euripides' play is a tragic figure, but he is characterized as such by means of epinician imagery; juxtaposing these two genres therefore provokes the audience to compare the roles that Heracles has in each of them.³⁸ The first part of this section will examine the use of epinician language in *Heracles*. I will then discuss Heracles' presentation in surviving *epinikia* and outline some important discontinuities from his tragic persona. Setting the play's use of *epinikion* in this broader context will help us to analyse how the epinician imagery can feed into our interpretation of the play's central themes.

³⁵ Parry (1965). ³⁶ Parry (1965) 374.

³⁷ e.g. Bond (1981) and Barlow (1996) on 637–700. See also Foley (1985) 177–88; Padilla (1994) 287–8.

³⁸ The most extensive study on Heracles' varying presentation in Greek literature is Galinsky (1972): see 23–38 for his views on the epinician Heracles, and 46–52 on *Trachiniae*.

Introducing *epinikion*

Ideas related to *epinikion* seep into the play from the very first words of the choral entry, when the Chorus stresses its old age and physical helplessness, a theme that recurs in the play and is used as a foil to Heracles' youth and physical vigour. The simile the Chorus uses is that of a yoked colt:

†μη̣ προκάμητε πόδα† βαρύ τε κῶ-
 λον ὥστε πρὸς πετραῖον
 λέπας † ζυγηφόρον πῶλον
 ἀνέντες ὡς βάρος φέρον
 τροχηλάτοις πώλου†. (119–23)

Do not let your feet and your limbs grow tired too soon, like a yoked colt as he climbs a stony hill drawing the weight of a wheeled chariot.

Although the text is corrupt, there is some kind of comparison between the old men's weariness and the weariness of the colt pulling a vehicle up a hill. The choice of simile is surprising; horses are usually an image of physical vigour, but here the colt represents the exhaustion of the aged. For this reason, Barlow rejects the simile, and suggests the text may be damaged beyond repair. However, the colt image is better understood if we regard it as a deliberate inversion of the norms. The choice of something superficially inappropriate makes the simile more striking than if the comparison were to something conventionally slow or old. A parallel is Ibycus fr. 287 *PMGF*, where the speaker describes himself as an old horse past its best, playing against our expectation that horses symbolize youthful beauty and strength.³⁹ However, the horse image also works on a more thematic level. Horses and horse-drawn vehicles can also be

³⁹ Cf. also Soph. *El.* 25–7. Ibycus' and Sophocles' horses are described as a ἔππος rather than a πῶλος; the latter word refers to a younger horse, and when used figuratively tends to be a feminine image, more often used of an unmarried girl than of a young man (e.g. Anacr. fr. 417 *PMG*; Eur. *Hec.* 142, *Hipp.* 546, *Andr.* 621). However, using the word for a younger animal here heightens the contrast between youth and age the Chorus focus upon.

suggestive of aristocratic values (beauty, physical power, and wealth, as well as equestrian competition) and these include a particular concept of what constitutes *aretē*.⁴⁰ Whilst these associations may not come to the fore at this point in the play, the presence of this imagery helps to guide the audience's expectations as the theme of *aretē* develops. From the introduction of the theme of age versus youth, the motif is set against a backdrop of elite and aristocratic values; thus *aretē* is set up in this model, and the audience is primed to understand it as such.

The first stasimon (348–450)

A more specific connection to *epinikion* emerges in the first stasimon (348–450). This ode comes at a point of despair: Megara and Amphitryon have resigned themselves to death and taken the children inside to dress them for their funeral, while the Chorus, believing Heracles to be dead, sing an ode commemorating his glory and his deeds. Bond and Barlow describe the ode as taking the form of a *thrēnos*, and cite Harvey's description of *thrēnoi* containing an encomiastic section.⁴¹ We know of *enkōmia* forming part of funerary rites, and this kind of *enkōmion* seems similar to what Plato envisages for good men in his ideal society (*Laws* 7.801e).⁴² But although the ode is coloured by its context of lamentation, its threnodic element is superficial. The first stasimon is better understood if we focus on its encomiastic nature: it is a song of praise, sung on an occasion where one might instead expect a *thrēnos* to be sung. In fact, the Chorus introduce the ode by making exactly this point:

⁴⁰ The fact that the carriage is described as *πρὸς πετραῖον λέπας* makes it unlikely that the horse is meant to be competing in a chariot race. The imagery is generally aristocratic rather than specifically athletic.

⁴¹ See Bond (1981) and Barlow (1996) on 348–441; Harvey (1955) 169–70.

⁴² Of course we should not forget that Plato is being prescriptive rather than descriptive here, and his suggestion that women receive equal *enkōmia* to men demonstrates we should not assume he is describing generally accepted practices. The funerary context of the praise seems to come from the idea that it is dangerous to praise men while they are still alive, rather than a particular feeling that praise is most appropriate at funerals (cf. *Laws* 802a).

αἴλινον μὲν ἐπ' εὐτυχεῖ
 μολπᾷ Φοῖβος ἱαχεῖ
 τὰν καλλίφθογον κιθάραν
 ἐλαύνων πλῆκτρῳ χρυσέῳ
 ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν γᾶς ἐνέρων τ'
 εἰς ὄρφναν μολόντα παῖδ',
 εἴτε Διὸς νιν εἴπω
 εἴτ' Ἀμφιτρώωνος ἱνιν,
 ὑμνῆσαι στεφάνωμα μό-
 χθων δι' εὐλογίας θέλω.
 γενναίων δ' ἀρεταὶ πόνων
 τοῖς θανούσιν ἄγαλμα. (348–58)

As Phoebus sings a lament after a song of good fortune, striking his lovely-voiced lyre with a golden plectrum, so I wish to hymn with praise, as the crown of his labours, the one who entered the darkness of those below the earth, whether I am to call him the son of Zeus or the offspring of Amphitryon. The virtues of noble toils are a glory to the dead.

The Chorus feel the need to justify their choice of song, which in itself suggests it is not obvious why it should be suitable. The sense is that a dirge might seem appropriate, but the Chorus instead wish to sing a praise-song, just as Apollo shifts modes from happiness to sorrow.⁴³ The final line of the stanza is a justification for this: since *aretē* is a source of glory to the dead, singing about their *aretē* is as appropriate as lamenting their passing. The presence of Apollo at the start of the ode emphasizes this point: Apollo is an unusual god to depict singing a lament. Bond suggests his presence is meant to suggest the singing of *paianes*, but notes that this would also be surprising, as placing *paianes* and dirges in conjunction is only done to be deliberately paradoxical.⁴⁴ In fact this paradox is the point of the image. Referring to Apollo is a way of highlighting the apparent incongruity of the Chorus's type of song.

The ode begins with the Chorus's declaration of their status as performer of a praise-song (ὑμνῆσαι στεφάνωμα μό-/χθων δι' εὐλογίας

⁴³ Cf. Barlow (1996) on 348. Contrast 1025–7 (τίνα στεναγμὸν / ἢ γόον ἢ φθιτῶν ὧδ' ἂν ἢ τίν' Ἀι-/δα χορὸν ἀχήσω;), where the type of song to be sung is uncontroversial; the question is purely rhetorical.

⁴⁴ Bond (1981) on 348.

θέλω, 355–6). This self-conscious ownership of the praise is a common motif in Pindaric *epinikia*, and usually occurs near the start of the poem, where the narrator introduces the subject of the praise and the singers' own role in proclaiming it.⁴⁵ The device is introduced in conjunction with a simile, which is brought in before it becomes clear that what it is being compared with is the act of performing the praise-poem. Again, this is a common epinician trait: for example, *Olympian* 7 compares performing the poem to pouring wine at a betrothal feast, *Olympian* 6 to building a hall.⁴⁶ The focus on the lyre in the simile is also epinician. Pindar often associates lyres with epinician performance, and the lyre is also used to stand for praise-poetry or praise more generally.⁴⁷

The mention of Heracles' parentage at 354–5 is normally explained as typical of a *hymnos*, and the allusion to Heracles' divine birth is certainly reminiscent of religious narrative.⁴⁸ However, Heracles' mortality is also foregrounded here through the mention of his mortal father Amphitryon, and this would be equally appropriate for the recipient of an *epinikion*. *Epinikia* frequently refer to the family of the *laudandus*, and particularly his father or sons. Sometimes the father is mentioned in passing, and the reference may be as brief as simply an address as 'son of X'. But at other times there are more sustained accounts of the father's response to the victory, or to his own past

⁴⁵ For ownership of the praise-song, e.g. Pind. *Ol.* 2.1–6, 3.1–9, 4.1–5, 7.1–10, 9.21–7, 10.1–6, 11.8–15, 13.11–12, *Pyth.* 2.1–6, 9.1–4, 10.4–7, *Nem.* 1.7, 3.9–17, 4.9–13, 5.1–5, 10.19–22, *Isth.* 1.1–12, 8.5–7. As Carey (1999) 18–19 notes, Bacchylides creates less sense of the poet's personal role, but the same underlying ideas still apply: Bacchyl. 1.183–4 suggests the role of poetry in guaranteeing *aretē* after death, whereas 5.16–33 alludes to the poet's role in guaranteeing praise.

⁴⁶ See also *Nem.* 5, where singing poetry is compared as being *different* to making statues. We also find the motif in Bacchylides, e.g. 12.1–3, where the poet being inspired by the Muse is compared to a helmsman steering a ship.

⁴⁷ Most notably at Pind. *Pyth.* 1, where the image of the lyre stands for the various positive effects brought about by music (harmony, balance, order). Also see *Ol.* 2.1, where the songs are addressed as ἀναξιφόρμιγγες. The lyre (φόρμιγξ or λύρα) is named as the accompaniment to *epinikia* at *Ol.* 1.17, 2.47, 3.8, 4.2, 9.13, 10.93, *Pyth.* 2.71, 8.31, *Nem.* 3.11–12, 4.5, 44, 9.8, 10.21, *Isth.* 5.27, and Bacchyl. 14.13. It is also evoked to stand for peace and happiness at *Ol.* 6.97, 7.12, *Pyth.* 4.296, 10.39, *Nem.* 11.7.

⁴⁸ For the hymnic interpretation see Barlow (1996) on 354–5. I discuss the implications of this mingling of genres below (pp. 147–50).

record.⁴⁹ Celebration of the victor's parentage is a way to glorify him and his family, and extend the praise beyond the occasion of the victory.

The Chorus see their song as a reward for *aretē*, another theme of *epinikion*. Epinician poets portray celebration in poetry as recompense for good moral character, or for great deeds. This theme is made explicit at *Pythian* 1.92–4:

ὀπιθόμβροτον αὔχημα δόξας
οἶον ἀποικομένων ἀνδρῶν δίαιταν μανύει
καὶ λογίοις καὶ ἀοιδοῖς.

When men die, only the glory of fame they leave behind them reveals their way of life, in stories and songs.

So at 97–8, the poet emphasizes that the tyrant Phalaris is not sung about to the accompaniment of the lyre, in contrast to the virtuous Croesus, whose *aretē* will never die. Similarly, at Bacchylides 1.181–4, the poet sets the hard work needed to achieve *aretē* against the unending glory which it brings.⁵⁰ Epinician choruses often see their song as a debt owed to the victor, on account of his *aretē*; as Kurke has shown, this motif is tied into the way that praise-song is construed as a form of gift-exchange in the aristocratic community.⁵¹ The Chorus of *Heracles* draw on this theme to justify the tone of their song, and by doing so they draw attention to the connection with *epinikion*.

The opening section of the ode therefore sets up the song that the Chorus are about to sing as being a type of *epinikion*, and the language of the passage is reminiscent of *epinikion* in a more general sense.⁵² The main part of the ode is an account of Heracles' labours. There was a long-standing tradition of associating Heracles' labours

⁴⁹ e.g. Pind. *Ol.* 2.46–9, 7.17, 13.35–6, 14.20–4, *Pyth.* 10.22–6, *Nem.* 4.13–16, 8.16, 11.11, *Isth.* 6.1–4, 8.3–5; Bacchyl. 1.145–58. See Golden (1998) 108–9 for athletic pedigree and the fathers of victors.

⁵⁰ For the rewards for *aretē*, see also Pind. *Ol.* 11.4–8, *Pyth.* 6.5–9, 9.103–5, 12.28–9, *Nem.* 3.6–8, *Isth.* 3.7–8, 6.56–62.

⁵¹ Kurke (1991) 97–107.

⁵² For στεφάνωμα, Pind. *Pyth.* 1.50, 9.4. Barlow (1996) on 355–8 gives parallels between *epinikia*, funeral speeches, and the language of this passage.

with athletic endeavour, dating back as far as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.⁵³ Moreover, Heracles was claimed as the founder of the Olympic Games, and his labours were the subject of the famous metopes on the temple of Zeus at Olympia, a site which would have been associated above all others with athleticism and praise-poetry.⁵⁴ And indeed, we find that the way the labours are described is reminiscent of *epinikion*, and the connection is made explicit at 425, where the labours are actually called *δρόμοι* ('running-races').

The language of the ode itself is ornate, with many compound epithets: some directly Pindaric, others created by analogy with the language of Pindar and Bacchylides.⁵⁵ The description of the labours uses ornamental language to create a decorative impression, rather than bringing out the violence or action of the scene.⁵⁶ If we are thinking in epinician mode, we may be reminded of the way epinician poets describe victories, as they rarely dwell on the athletic contest itself. We are sometimes given a snapshot of the moment of victory or of the victor wreathed, but frequently the victory is simply taken as read. The description of the labours focuses on the places where they occurred, describing them in detail by reference to local mountains and rivers.⁵⁷ This focusing on local features is, of course, epinician: it emphasizes the fame of the place, and the audience's familiarity with it. Once again, we find a feature which may not be distinctive when taken in isolation gains epinician colouring when read in conjunction with a clustering of other epinician motifs.

⁵³ Heracles' labours are described as *ἄεθλα* at Hom. *Il.* 8.363, 19.133, *Od.* 11.622. For Heracles as an athletic prototype, see Mouratidis (1984); Emmanuel-Rebuffat (1985); Boardman in *LIMC* s.v. 'Herakles' 796–7; Golden (1998) 146–57.

⁵⁴ Cf. Bond (1981) 154; Barlow (1996) 139. For Heracles' foundation of the Games, see Pind. *Ol.* 2.3–4, 3.9–38, 6.67–70, 10.24–30, *Nem.* 10.32–3, 11.27–8; Apollod. 2.7.2.

⁵⁵ Cf. Barlow (1996) 139. She cites *ποικιλόνωτον* (376) and *ξεινοδαίκταν* (391) as belonging to the former category, drawing on Pind. *Pyth.* 4.249, fr. 140a 56 S–M, and *ὄρειόμωμον* (364), *χρυσοκάρανον* (375), and *δυστράπεζοι* (386) (amongst others) as belonging to the latter.

⁵⁶ Barlow (1982) 118–20 suggests that the picturesque depiction of the labours sets up a contrast with Heracles' later actions within the palace.

⁵⁷ The killing of the Centaurs is described as taking place beside the river Peneios and near Mt Pelion and Homole (369–71), the horses of Diomedes as being beyond the river Hebrus (387), the killing of Cynus as by the cliffs of Malis and the river Anauros (389–90), and the Amazons as by Lake Maeotis (409).

The first stasimon, then, sets up Heracles in the model of an athletic victor. His *aretē*, expressed through his physical achievements, is a source of celebration, and leads him to be commemorated in song. The end of the ode also alludes to this connection, in the damaged section which describes Megara as pulling the children along like a trace-horse (446), another athletic image.⁵⁸

The second stasimon (637–700)

The first and second stasima are connected by the theme of youth and age which runs through the play. Heracles is the embodiment of youth and youthful vigour, so the comments on age serve as a foil to ideas associated with youth. At the end of the first stasimon we are reminded of the motif as the Chorus wish that they could regain their youth in order to protect the children (436–40). The Chorus leader's iambic speech also highlights this theme, as he laments his own weakness and wishes he could take up his spear against Lycus (268–74).

The second stasimon begins with this same theme: praise of youth and lamentation for old age. The epinician language in the second stasimon has been thoroughly discussed by Parry; as his arguments have been widely accepted, I shall only summarize them here. As Parry notes, the youth/age motif is a traditional moral which we might expect to find in any choral ode, and evokes a set of traditional values. The conventionality of the motif means that audience and Chorus are in agreement on the basis for the praise which follows: the *gnōmē* is comforting, and establishes a similar set of values at the outset.

The praise of youth then takes on a moral flavour as the Chorus discuss what the best things in life are, concluding that youth is better than wealth (637–49). The comparison of wealth, youth, and other

⁵⁸ The phrase used (ὕπὸ σειραίοις ποσσὶν) is difficult, but refers to a trace-horse (ἵππος σειραῖος). The image is that Megara is pulling the children along beside her, as though by a rope. Bond (1981) conjectures as to how to make sense of the passage in his note on 178–9. Also see Barlow (1996) on 446.

forms of excellence is also a *topos* of *epinikion*.⁵⁹ Wealth symbolizes the strongest form of mortal security, and stands for worldly hopes in general; *epinikia* tend to present it as a desirable attribute, but one which is ultimately less important than other forms of *aretē*. Youth, both in *epinikia* and in this passage, is associated with physical prowess. Thus when the Chorus idealize youth, the implication is that it is physical *aretē* and athletic success which they set above all other qualities.

The Chorus then use this basis to move to moralizing about how one can prove *aretē*. The train of thought runs as follows: youth is such a good thing that good men deserve to have two youths, and this would also have the advantage of allowing us to distinguish between good and bad men; however, since there is no way to tell, how are we to know what *aretē* is? The difficulty of distinguishing good and bad men, and the nature of *aretē*, are also traditional themes which we find in many other places in Greek literature.⁶⁰ In the second half of the ode, the Chorus appeal to the Graces and the Muses, before launching into a discussion of the song itself, and the role of the singer. This connection is a common one in *epinikion*: we find a transition from a description of *aretē* to a focus on the importance of the poet.⁶¹ As with the first stasimon, we find a focus on the power of praise-song and its role in highlighting the nature of *aretē*, and preserving it.⁶² As we have seen above, this theme is associated with *epinikion*; in addition, Parry demonstrates that the Graces and Muses have a traditional role in encomiastic literature, and are often linked.⁶³ Indeed, the Chorus's prayer that they should always be possessed of garlands (αἰεὶ δ' ἐν στεφάνοισιν εἶην, 677) seems reminiscent of the way Pindar uses athletic language to describe his own

⁵⁹ Cf. Pind. *Ol.* 1.113–14, *Pyth.* 3.110–11, 5.1–5, 8.87–94, *Nem.* 5.18–20, 8.37–8, *Isth.* 3.1–3, Bacchyl. 1.159–77, 3.87–92, 5.50–5, 10.38–51.

⁶⁰ Bacchyl. 1.159–84 is an extensive (epinician) discussion of *aretē* versus other types of good thing, while Simon. fr. 542 *PMG* examines what it means to be ἀγαθός. For the difficulty of telling good men from bad ones, see Thgn. 119–28; Eur. *Med.* 516–19; *Hipp.* 925–31; *El.* 373–9.

⁶¹ Parry cites Pind. *Ol.* 1.115–16, 6.105, *Pyth.* 3.114–15, *Nem.* 9.6–10, *Isth.* 4.42–4, Bacchyl. 3.88–92.

⁶² Parry (1965) 369–70.

⁶³ Parry (1965) 370–1. Pindar, *Nem.* 9.53 is an example of the Muses and Graces being linked.

powers as a praise-poet: on the 'logical' level the garlands may simply refer to celebration, but coming in the context of a cluster of athletic imagery they become infected with more specific connotations.⁶⁴ However, as the Chorus sing the ode, they assume that *aretē* is equivalent to moral goodness (*ἀρετή* at 659 is used with the same meaning as *ἀγαθός* at 666 and *χρηστός* at 670).⁶⁵ In fact, however, we will soon see *aretē* harnessed to achieve evil.

The third stasimon (763–814)

The third stasimon sets a tone of exaltation and forms the culmination of the praise of Heracles which has been steadily building throughout the previous two stasima. Immediately before catastrophe is unleashed on the house, the Chorus celebrate the conquering strength of Heracles and the justice of the gods. The ode is often described as hymnic, and indeed its unbridled praise of Heracles and portrayal of him as saviour and protector is more reminiscent of a religious than a secular song.⁶⁶ However, here too there are epinician overtones to the way the Chorus praise Heracles. The rejoicing is explicitly construed as communal musical celebration in the opening words of the stasimon (*χοροὶ χοροὶ / καὶ θαλαῖαι μέλουσιν*, 763–4), and epinician flavouring continues in the moralizing *gnōmai* that follow in the second stanza. In particular, the potential danger of wealth and luxury is a common epinician theme: the role of wealth and power, and the importance of using it correctly, is something that concerns the recipients of *epinikia*.⁶⁷

As in many *epinikia*, Heracles is praised through his city, and the city is said to rejoice in his triumph: the rivers Ismenus, Dirce, and

⁶⁴ Garlands can also be a mark of poets, specifically poets' engagement in cultic activity: see Blech (1982) 312–16.

⁶⁵ The slippery nature of these terms and their shifting meanings (morally good, well-born, rich, successful, etc.) are a commonplace of Greek poetry, e.g. Simon. fr. 542 PMG; Thgn. 53–68. For the importance of these themes in *Heracles*, see Cerri (2000).

⁶⁶ Burnett (1971) 167–8.

⁶⁷ For the role that wealth, power, and *aretē* should play, see Pind. *Ol.* 1.103–8, 113–14, 2.19–20, 53–4, *Pyth.* 1.86–92, 3.110–11, 7.14–18, *Nem.* 1.10–12, 31–3, *Isth.* 3.4–6; 5.13–16; Bacchyl. 1.159–63.

Asopus, and the streets of Thebes are instructed to join in the dancing (781–9). The Muses are called upon once more to help with the praise of Thebes (*Μουσᾶν θ' Ἑλικωνίδων δώματα*, 791). Just as Pindar praises the Cyreneans through the myths of Cyrene and Battus (*Pyth.* 4, 5, and 9), or the Rhodians through the story of the creation of the island of Rhodes (*Ol.* 7), Thebes is praised through its foundation myth: that of the Spartoi:

αὔξετ' εὐγαθεί κελεύει
 ἑμὴν πόλιν, ἑμὰ τείχη,
 Σπαρτῶν ἵνα γένος ἐφάνθη
 χαλκασπίδων λόχος, ὃς γὰν
 τέκνων τέκνοις μεταμείβει,
 Θήβαις ἱερὸν φῶς. (792–7)

Glorify with a joyous shout my city, my walls, where the race of the Spartoi appeared, that band of warriors with their bronze-shields, which passed down the land to its children's children, as a sacred light for Thebes.

The Chorus emphasize the continuity from the Thebes of myth to the current inhabitants of the city.⁶⁸ Thus we are reminded of the power of local myth to praise contemporary citizens: another strategy frequently used by *epinikia*.

In requiring this praise, the Chorus describe Heracles' victory explicitly in terms of athletic success, referring to it as a *καλλίνικος ἀγών* (789). *Καλλίνικος* is a common epithet of Heracles, and also a cult title of his, but it also has athletic overtones.⁶⁹ The triumph song attributed to Archilochus, which was sung for Olympic victors, begins and ends with the refrain *τήνελλα καλλίνικε χαῖρε ἄναξ Ἡράκλεις*, and is sometimes just referred to as *καλλίνικε*.⁷⁰ Pindar uses the epithet *καλλίνικος* to refer to the victory song (*Pyth.* 5.106; *Nem.* 3.19, 4.16), but he also uses it to refer to athletic victory more generally: for example at *Isth.* 1.12, and 5.54 where the victory itself is called *καλλίνικος*, or at *Pyth.* 1.32 where it is used to describe the

⁶⁸ For discussion of the role that Thebes plays for an Athenian audience, see Zeitlin (1990); (1993); Bernardini (2000); Cerri (2000).

⁶⁹ The formal cult title was used at Erythrai and in Egypt. See Farnell (1896) vol. 1, s.v. 'Zeus', ref. 137b, vol. 4, s.v. 'Apollo' ref. 4; Farnell (1921) 147–9.

⁷⁰ Pind. *Ol.* 9.1 refers to the singing of this song, and the story of its composition is given in Schol. Pind. *Ol.* 9.1a3. Also see *Suda* τ 518 = iv.542.15 Adler.

winning chariot. The epithet does not simply mean 'victorious', but has a specific connection with athletic victory and with Heracles in his capacity as patron of athletic achievement.⁷¹

We have seen, then, that *epinikion* is not limited to the second stasimon, but is evoked in all three of the choral odes. The use of epinician imagery provides a thematic framework for understanding the chorus of *Heracles*, and is thus a unifying device. However, epinician language is not simply a structural device, and its significance is not confined to the choral odes but is linked more broadly to the play's concerns. We should therefore begin by exploring the presentation of Heracles as an epinician figure, and by analysing the differences we see in Euripides' play.⁷² As we shall see, *epinikion* attributes a particular persona to Heracles, and one which is at odds with his portrayal in Euripides. In this context, a comparison with Sophocles' *Trachiniae* will also assist us in drawing more general conclusions about Heracles as an epinician and tragic figure.

Heracles in *epinikion*

Heracles was believed to have founded the Olympic Games, and he is therefore a common choice of mythological exemplum for epinician poets: fourteen of Pindar's *epinikia* mention Heracles; he is also the focus of an extended mythological narrative in Bacchylides 5, and mentioned in Bacchylides 9.⁷³ While some of these references are brief, in most cases Heracles is mentioned in order to elucidate or support an important element in the ode. Thus, for example in *Isthmian* 6 Heracles prophesies the future birth of Ajax, ancestral hero of the Aiacidæ in whose honour the song is composed (52–4). Including Heracles in the myth emphasizes the future greatness of

⁷¹ Schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 11, 70.2 and *Pyth.* 1, 58.3 uses *καλλίνικος* just to mean 'victorious in the competition'. Eur. *Phoen.* 858, *IT* 12 and fr. 9d35 uses it of a victory which is metaphorically athletic (in conjunction with *στέφος* and *στέφανος*). At Eur. *Phoen.* 1048 and 1059 it is used twice in a context of other athletic metaphors (war is described as an *ἀγών*).

⁷² Foley (1985) 175–6 discusses the different personae and associations of Heracles in the play.

⁷³ Heracles features in Pind. *Ol.* 3, 6, 9, 10, *Pyth.* 9, *Nem.* 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, *Isth.* 1, 4, 6, 7.

the unborn child, and also assimilates his own athletic prowess to the family's story. Similarly, *Isthmian* 7, composed for a Theban victor, mentions Heracles as the glory of Thebes (5–7) and hence alludes to the long tradition of athletic success in the city.

Epinikion thus uses Heracles in a fairly consistent manner (with the exception of Bacchylides 5, discussed below). While tragedy emphasizes the negative aspects of myth, *epinikion* tends to focus on the positive.⁷⁴ The two surviving tragedies about Heracles deal with the darkest moments in his life: his madness and child-killing (Euripides' *Heracles*) and his death at the hands of his wife (Sophocles' *Trachiniae*). Conversely, Pindar selects Heracles' most admirable acts and presents him as a source of glory for his city (*Isth.* 1.12–13, 7.5–7). Heracles is a founding figure and a slayer of monsters (*Ol.* 10.24–50; *Nem.* 1.62–6). His more questionable actions are explicitly suppressed: Pindar rejects the tradition that Heracles fought Apollo for the Delphic tripod (*Ol.* 9.30–6), and presents the deaths of his children not as a horrific murder but as a source of cult worship (*Isth.* 4.63–4). It is not stated that Heracles himself killed the children; indeed Pindar's description of them as 'bronze-armed' (χαλκοαῤ᾽, 63) implies that they died as adults and in war. Similarly, *Isthmian* 4 alludes to the relationship between Heracles and Hera, but presents it as reconciled through marriage (γαμβρὸς Ἥρας, 78).⁷⁵ Heracles' status as future demigod and cult hero thus stands in contrast with his presentation as a suffering figure in Euripides' *Heracles*.⁷⁶

Heracles' status as civilizer, cult hero, and Olympic founder is presented by Pindar as indistinguishable from his future immortality. Thus, for example, when the infant Heracles strangles Hera's monstrous snakes in *Nemean* 1, Tiresias prophesies his future divine status as well as his greatness:

αὐτὸν μὰν ἐν εἰρή-
νῃ τὸν ἅπαντα χρόνον <ἐν> σκερῶ
ἥσυχίαν καμάτων μεγάλων
ποινὰν λαχόντ' ἐξαίρετον

⁷⁴ Cf. Rutherford (2007) 8–9.

⁷⁵ Cf. Willcock (1995) 85.

⁷⁶ Similarly, Heracles in Pind. fr. 169 S–M can be seen as acting as a civilizer in stealing the cattle of the monstrous Geryon: see Lloyd-Jones (1972).

δλβίοις ἐν δώμασι, δεξάμενον
 θαλερὰν Ἥβαν ἄκοιτιν καὶ γάμον
 daísanta pàr Δι Κρονίδα,
 σεμνὸν αἰνήσειν νόμον. (69–72)

But [Tiresias said] as the choicest recompense for his vast labours he would have allotted to him tranquillity for all of time, in continual peace, in a happy home, and he would receive blossoming Hebe as his bride and would celebrate his wedding with Zeus son of Cronus and praise his holy rule.

Thus Heracles' struggles on earth are contrasted with his tranquillity in heaven, and the latter is the reward for undertaking the former. Similarly, *Olympian* 3 refers to Heracles' apotheosis as part of the story of his foundation of the Olympic Games. *Isthmian* 4 also depicts Heracles' ascent to Olympus as following his killing of the murderous giant Antaeus (52–54b), presented as an act to protect mankind (κρανίοις ὄφρα ξένων / ναὸν Ποσειδάωνος ἐρέφοντα σχέθαι, 59–60).

Heracles therefore has a particular persona in epinician poetry, and one which stands in contrast to his presentation in tragedy. This should not in itself be surprising, for whereas tragedy tends to focus on the crises in heroes' lives, *epinikion* prefers to emphasize their positive qualities. Thus for example, while Euripides' *Medea* focuses on Medea as a murderess and child-killer, Pindar's *Pythian* 4 stresses her power to act for good (her prophetic powers and her assistance of Jason, 13–58, 218–23), though it also acknowledges her destructive potential (for example, her murder of Pelias, 250).⁷⁷ Both tragedy and *epinikia* engage with the theme of the relationship between the powerful individual and the wider group: a theme of importance to any Greek *polis*. However, while tragedy shows the flaws of these aristocratic heroes, their excesses and inability to abide by ordinary values, *epinikia* focus on the positive resolution of this same theme, exploring the potential dangers of *phthonos* but also presenting the *laudandus* in a beneficial relationship with his community. The differences between tragic and epinician world-views can be explained as resulting from the performance context and function of each genre: whereas tragedy uses heroes to explore painful issues of

⁷⁷ Cf. Mastronarde (2002) 46.

contemporary relevance, *epinikion* sets them up as mythological foils to the *laudandus*' own achievements. What is particularly interesting about Euripides' *Heracles*, however, is that the play presents Heracles as a tragic character, but in doing so deliberately evokes his epinician persona. Thus, rather than being able to attribute the variations in presentation of Heracles to the demands of different genres, the audience is forced to set the two versions of Heracles side by side and to compare them.

Bacchylides 5: a tragic Heracles?

The portrayal of Heracles in *epinikion* is not entirely uniform, however, for Bacchylides 5 presents us with an instructive counter-example. The poem contains a prolonged narrative describing Heracles' visit to the underworld and his conversation with the ghost of Meleager. The reason for Heracles' visit to Hades is a typical piece of heroic action: to abduct Cerberus (60). However, the poem fails to describe this act, and instead focuses on the dialogue between the two heroes. Thus, Heracles is presented not as a model for physical prowess, but in the context of a moral lesson about the impossibility of achieving total happiness (50–5). The most obvious paradigm is Meleager, whose fate prompts Heracles to weep for the only time in his life (155–7) but the mythological section concludes with an ostentatious foreshadowing of Heracles' own death at the hands of Deianeira (165–75), introduced with the ironic twist that Heracles brings his fate upon himself by seeking out Deianeira's hand in marriage because of his pity and admiration for Meleager (165–9). The poet thus manipulates the audience's awareness of the Heracles myth to achieve irony, playing their knowledge against his ignorance: a strategy familiar from tragedy.⁷⁸ Indeed, Meleager's statement that Deianeira is 'still without experience of golden Aphrodite, the enchantress of mortals' (νήϊν ἔτι χρυσεάς / Κύπριδος θελεμβρότου, 174–5) alludes to the disastrous power that Aphrodite will wield

⁷⁸ Burnett (1985) 141 also notes that the mythological section structurally resembles a tragic messenger scene.

over Heracles and Deianeira, and Deianeira's murder of her husband as a result of his sexual infidelity.⁷⁹

Bacchylides 5 thus explores the Heracles myth from a rather different angle to what we find in other extant *epinikia*. A natural conclusion might simply be that the conventions of *epinikion* were rather more flexible than we tend to assume. In particular, one might argue that Bacchylides' style and tone is different from that of Pindar, and that he therefore uses heroes in a different way: for example, one could compare Croesus' speech in poem 3, where he criticizes the gods for their ingratitude (37–47).⁸⁰ Croesus is saved because of his piety, and so his criticisms of the gods turn out to be unfounded; nevertheless his speech is striking for its emotional intensity, and as such it is unlike the upbeat handling of myths we tend to find in Pindar.⁸¹ In fact, however, poem 5 ostentatiously draws attention to its own breaking of conventions, when the poet warns his Muse off the theme and diverts her to more appropriate topics for epinician song.⁸²

Λευκώλενε Καλλιόπα,
 σῶσον εὐποίητον ἄρμα
 αὐτοῦ Δία τε Κρονίδα
 ὕμνησον Ὀλύμπιον ἀρχαγὸν θεῶν,
 τὸν τ' ἀκαμαντορόαν Ἄλ-
 φεόν, Πέλοπός τε βίαν,
 καὶ Πίσαν ἔνθ' ὁ κλεεννὸς

⁷⁹ Cf. Lefkowitz (1969) 86.

⁸⁰ For a comparison of Croesus' speech to epinician conventions, see Hutchinson (2001) 342; Currie (2005) 402.

⁸¹ Note, however, that Heracles is mentioned for his killing of the Nemean lion in Bacchyl. 9.6–10, a presentation more in line with what we have already examined. Conversely, Polydeuces' speech in *Nem.* 10.75–9 is a Pindaric presentation of a grieving and distressed hero, even though tragedy is averted by the intervention of Zeus. For Bacchylides' compassionate tone and ambivalent presentation of his characters, see Carey (1999).

⁸² Carey (1999) 22 takes the fact that the decision to change topic is presented as an injunction to the Muse rather than grounded in the poet's own attitudes as indicating a less emotional approach. However, one could equally well take the injunction as representing the poet's shock that the Muse has got this far: involving a third party can increase rather than decrease the intensity of the statement, and any form of apostrophe automatically involves the narrator as much as a first-person statement does.

[πο]σσι νικάσας δρόμῳ
 [ῆλθ]εν Φερένικος <ἐς> εὐπύργους Συρα-
 κόσας Ἰέρωνι φέρων
 [εὐδ]αιμονίας πέταλον. (176–86)

White-armed Calliope, stop your well-wrought chariot here. Sing of Zeus the son of Cronus, Olympian ruler of gods, and of the tireless stream of Alpheus, and the might of Pelops, and Pisa, where famous Pherenicus sped on his feet to victory in the race and brought back the leaf of good fortune back to Syracuse of the fine towers.

We thus find the poet's own confirmation that his treatment of the myth is not in line with the norms of *epinikion*; indeed that the story needs to be stopped before the further ramifications of Heracles' encounter with Meleager can be described. The abrupt transition is prompted by the mention of Deianeira; hence the implication is that Heracles' ultimate fate should not be mentioned in an epinician ode. This idea is presented through the image of the Muse's chariot (177), which reminds us of the athletic function of the song and of the bond between athletic achievement and poetic reward. The poet then goes on to suggest more suitable topics, building up a dense cluster of themes related to Olympia, which again highlights the poem's diversion from the norms of praise-song. Thus, Bacchylides draws attention to the norms of how Heracles is presented in *epinikia* even as he manipulates them. Bacchylides presents his treatment of the Heracles myth as a piece of innovation; something that strains the conventions of the poem so much that abrupt authorial intervention is required to get the song back on track.⁸³

Poem 5, then, in fact serves to confirm the conventions of how heroes, and Heracles in particular, are handled in *epinikion*. Moreover, whilst the poem's treatment of Heracles may be unusual, it still stops short of what we find in tragedy. The poem may allude to Heracles' fate, but it does not actually depict it; we do not see Heracles suffering and mortal, as we do in *Heracles* or in *Trachiniae*. In Bacchylides, Heracles' death needs to be supplied by the audience, for within the context of the poem itself we see him as a great and

⁸³ This authorial break-off or 'Abbruchsformel' is a common epinician feature: for a recent discussion of the technique see H. Mackie (2003) ch. 1.

powerful hero, in a position to pity those less fortunate than himself (155–8). Even the moral that Heracles draws from what he has heard contains optimism as well as pessimism, for while Heracles utters the tragic *topos* that it is best never to have been born (160–2), the conclusion he draws from this is of the necessity for heroic action (162–4).⁸⁴ Indeed, once the audience has supplied Heracles' fate at the hands of Deianeira, they may equally well supply the story of his subsequent deification, a standard part of the Heracles myth. Heracles' persona in *epinikion*, then, even at its most unconventional, is still significantly more optimistic than his treatment by the tragedians.

The tragic Heracles and Sophocles' *Trachiniae*

Compared to his popularity in *epinikion*, Heracles features relatively rarely in tragedy. In *Alcestis* and *Philoctetes*, as well as in several lost plays, he appears in a role not dissimilar to what we have seen from *epinikion*.⁸⁵ In *Alcestis*, despite his humorous excess and large appetite, he is ultimately a saviour and protector, rewarding Admetus' hospitality by rescuing his wife from Hades. Heracles' athletic associations are also brought to the fore as he firstly claims to have won the mysterious slave-woman (*Alcestis*) in an athletic contest (1026–36), and later describes his struggle with Death which Admetus refers to as an *ἀγών* (1141). In *Philoctetes* he is still more clearly a beneficent and divine figure, appearing from the *mēchanē* to salvage the situation on earth. However, in the two surviving tragedies which feature Heracles as a main character, he is portrayed in a very different manner. Both *Heracles* and *Trachiniae* focus on the darkest moments

⁸⁴ Cf. Lefkowitz (1969) 85: 'his faith in the material world has not really been shaken'. We see a similar moral drawn in Bacchyl. 3.76–84 where Apollo advises Admetus that since he is mortal he should spend his life doing pious deeds (*ἵσσια δρῶν εὐφραϊνε θυμόν*, 83).

⁸⁵ Heracles the protector is attested in Phrynichus' *Alcestis*; [Aesch.] *Prometheus Unbound*; Soph. *Athamas*; Eur. *Auge*; Critias, *Pirithous*: cf. Silk (1985) 4. As Silk notes, the portrayal of Heracles in Soph. *Trach.* and Eur. *Her.* is therefore unusual even in tragedy.

in Heracles' life, and present him as a flawed and human figure, who can suffer like any other mortal. In addition, *Trachiniae*, like *Heracles*, makes use of epinician imagery in its portrayal of Heracles, thus encouraging the audience to compare the hero's differing personae.

In *Trachiniae* the main use of epinician language occurs in the first stasimon, where Heracles' fight with Achelous for Deianeira's hand is portrayed as an athletic contest, and couched in epinician terms (497–530).⁸⁶ However, whilst the ode appears to celebrate Heracles' victory, it is in fact Aphrodite who is the *laudanda*, and the function of the ode is to praise her power. Thus, the shifting of emphasis from Heracles to Aphrodite highlights Heracles' defeat by the power of Eros, a theme made explicit elsewhere in the play. Thus, the supreme power of Eros means that Deianeira finds it impossible to blame Heracles for succumbing to love (ὥστ' εἴ τι τῶμῶ γ' ἀνδρὶ τῇδε τῇ νόσῳ / ληφθέντι μεμπτός εἰμι, κάρτα μαίνομαι, 'So if I blame my husband for being seized by this illness, I am surely mad', 445–6), while Lichas also points out the irony of Heracles, the supreme victor, being subdued by this one enemy (ὥς τ' ἀλλ' ἐκείνος πάντ' ἀριστεύων χεροῖν / τοῦ τῇσδ' ἔρωτος εἰς ἅπανθ' ἦσσαν ἔφνυ, 'he excelled in everything else with the power of his hands, but he has been utterly defeated by his lust for this girl', 488–9). By drawing on Heracles' associations with athleticism and physical prowess, Sophocles enhances the irony of his fall. We are reminded that Heracles is the greatest of athletes, but even he cannot 'stand up to box with Eros', as Deianeira describes resisting the power of Love (441–4). Sophocles thus evokes the imagery of Heracles as powerful athlete only to overturn it, for in this play he turns out to be the mortal victim of a greater power, and when he appears he is not the powerful athlete we expect, but a weakened and suffering figure. While the epinician Heracles is above all associated with physical strength

⁸⁶ I have written on *Trachiniae* in detail in Swift (forthcoming *b*) and so will give an overview rather than reproducing the argument here. For the epinician language of the first stasimon, see Easterling (1982) on 497–530; Carey (forthcoming). Burton (1980) notes (55) that certain stylistic features of the ode are reminiscent of *epinikion*, but does not develop this point in relation to the ode's athletic content. For other lyric echoes in this ode, see Rodighiero (2008).

and vigour, it is Heracles' physical pain that *Trachiniae* dwells on in gruesome detail.⁸⁷

More generally, the use of epinician language evokes Heracles' presentation in *epinikion*, and encourages the audience to compare it with the Heracles they see on-stage, thus creating a mismatch in values and expectations. *Epinikia* frequently mention Heracles' future apotheosis, whereas in *Trachiniae* the importance of the apotheosis is downplayed: even if the audience is aware of Heracles' deification, it is his human suffering which the play emphasizes.⁸⁸ Thus evoking *epinikion* may remind the audience of the usual story of Heracles' future reward in heaven, but it also creates a contrast with the suffering Heracles of the play. The use of epinician language also brings out the contrast in Heracles' character in the tragedy. For whereas *epinikion* stresses the positive aspects of Heracles' heroism, in *Trachiniae* he is a more negative figure. The play foregrounds his selfish and violent qualities: his undermining of Deianeira's position; his murder of Lichas; his harsh treatment of Hyllas.⁸⁹ This excessive behaviour may be typically 'heroic', but the play encourages us to recognize the darker side of heroism, and the destructive effects it has on communities and relationships. Thus *Trachiniae* encourages its audience to compare the gulf between the 'epinician' and the 'tragic' Heracles. The epinician echoes are therefore ironic, since they highlight the extent to which Heracles falls short of our expectations of him in that genre. Yet the allusion to the epinician Heracles reminds us of the positive role that the hero can ultimately fulfil, and thus help to bridge the gap between the two versions of Heracles that the play presents or alludes to: suffering hero and demigod.

⁸⁷ Cf. Bowra (1944) 137–9; Hutchinson (1999) 50 on the irony of Heracles being reduced to a peculiarly painful form of physical suffering.

⁸⁸ The question of the apotheosis in *Trachiniae* is much discussed, and the literature is extensive: for a full bibliography see Stinton (1986) 480 n. 89 and Liapis (2006) 56 nn. 23–4.

⁸⁹ Segal (1981) 61 and Silk (1985) 6 note that Heracles always contains this inherent ambiguity, as he represents both the best and the worst of mankind.

Epiniician *aretē* and tragic consequences

Trachiniae thus provides an instructive comparison with Euripides' play, and, as we shall see, the two plays contain similarities in the way epiniician imagery is deployed. In the case of *Heracles*, the epiniician language illuminates various themes within the play: in particular the nature of *aretē*, and the portrayal of Heracles as a quasi-divine figure.

As Parry noted, the use of epiniician language forms a pattern of ascending praise for Heracles which culminates in disaster.⁹⁰ The level of praise directed at the hero increases over the three odes, which heightens the drama and pathos of his fall. The shift from the language of praise to the language of mourning is sudden and dramatic. Euripides' version of the myth works on a more general level to maximize this effect, as he relocates the moment of Heracles' madness to after rather than before his labours, thus setting Heracles' fall at the height of his powers.⁹¹

However, the epiniician references also create irony at a more thematic level through the concept of *aretē* expressed in the play. The question of what constitutes *aretē* is a central one both to *epinikion* and to *Heracles*, where it is touched upon explicitly at various points including in the second stasimon.⁹² The play sets *aretē* up in a particular model: associated with athletic and physical prowess, set against old age and physical incapacity. Whereas physical weakness is described in terms of its inability to defend others, *aretē* and physical valour have a protective function.

Specifically, the Chorus believe that, in contrast with their powerlessness, Heracles will be able to save the children because of his strength (434–5, 735–9). Heracles himself sees protecting his children as a manifestation of the *aretē* for which he is praised, and aligns his duty to look after them (and his eventual failure to do so) with his

⁹⁰ Parry (1965) 374.

⁹¹ We have little evidence for the ordering of the madness and the labours before Euripides, but later writers put the madness before the labours (cf. Nicolaus of Damascus (*FGrHist* 90 F 13); Diod. 4.10.6; Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.4.12). See Bond (1981) xxviii–xxix on the ordering of events.

⁹² The importance of *aretē* as a theme has been frequently observed: cf. Chalk (1962); Kamerbeek (1966) 7–8; Papadopoulou (2005) 130–4.

other labours (578–82, 1279–80).⁹³ Similarly, Iris describes the children as a *καλλίπαις στέφανος* ('garland of fair children', 839), suggesting the children are equivalent to an athletic success. But in fact it is precisely Heracles' strength that leads to the children's deaths: his *aretē* does not guarantee correct behaviour, nor does it protect against evil.⁹⁴ This mismatch between tragic and epinician world-views is a similar technique to the portrayal of Heracles in *Trachiniae*: in both cases the epinician language encourages us to view the hero in a particular light, which is then undermined by what we see in the play. Both plays highlight the negative aspects of the traditional values which *epinikia* present positively: in *Trachiniae* we see how Heracles' greatness makes him a less-than-ideal father and husband, while in *Heracles* the hero's physical prowess turns out to be a destructive rather than a protective force. Both plays therefore work against a template of the epinician Heracles, and their ironic effects are achieved by guiding the audience to see how the tragic Heracles they see falls short of his glorious epinician persona.

In *Heracles*, this theme is enhanced by the use of athletic imagery to describe Heracles' madness and his murder of the children. Lyssa herself is constructed in athletic terms: she describes her impact on Heracles in terms of a foot-race (*στάδια δραμοῦμαι*, 863), while the Chorus call her a charioteer:

βέβακεν ἐν δίφροισιν ἅ πολύστονος,
ἄρμασι δ' ἐνδίδωσι
κέντρον ὡς ἐπὶ λώβῃ (880–3)

She of the many groans has mounted her chariot, and she lays the goad on, aiming for outrage.

The repetition of words indicating the chariot (*δίφρος*, *ἄρμα*) lays particular emphasis on the metaphor. As Kovacs notes, Lyssa has in fact entered the *skēnē* on foot rather than leaving by the *mēchanē*, and so cannot be literally characterized as a charioteer at this point: hence, the symbolic connotations of the imagery become more

⁹³ See Walsh (1979) 305–6 for the conflict between Heracles' public and personal forms of *aretē*.

⁹⁴ Cf. Barlow (1982) 124: 'the same characteristics of the hero exist but are used in a tragically inappropriate way'.

significant.⁹⁵ The image of Lyssa applying the goad could simply suggest that she is urging on her horses, but the inclusion of the phrase *ὥς ἐπὶ λώβῃ* creates a more disturbing impression.⁹⁶ Whereas a charioteer might normally apply the goad in order to achieve victory or glory, Lyssa's aim in doing so is to bring about dishonour. Thus, the image highlights the inversion of athletic values, and indicates how Heracles' physical strength is about to be turned to his disgrace.

This theme is further emphasized by the portrayal of Heracles' madness as fantasy athletics. This idea is first introduced by Lyssa's description of Heracles becoming mad as a runner beginning his race (*καὶ δὴ τινάσσει κράτα βαλβίδων ἄπο*, 867). The Messenger's account of the action within the house turns this from metaphor into reality, as Heracles himself believes that he is participating in an athletic contest. He begins by believing that he is stepping into a chariot (947–9), and his action of using the goad (*κέντρῳ δῆθεν ὥς θείνων*, 949) mirrors the imagery applied to Lyssa. The athletic imagery then becomes more obvious as Heracles imagines he is participating in the Isthmian Games and wins a wrestling match (957–61), before beginning his killing of the children. His attempted attack on his father is then described as a horseback charge (*ἰππεύει*, 1001). The juxtaposition of the athletics and the murders further highlights the amoral nature of physical *aretē*, for both the athleticism and the murders spring from the same delusion, and both are made possible by Heracles' physical strength. Thus, whereas the traditional values of *epinikion* celebrate physical *aretē* as a morally praiseworthy quality, *Heracles* uses the same language to undermine this value-system, demonstrating how dangerous athletic strength can be if misapplied. The choice of the Isthmian Games is particularly interesting, for *Isthmian* 4 connects the Games with sacrifices in honour of Heracles' dead sons (61–4). Moreover, the scholiast on line 61 tells us that the

⁹⁵ Kovacs (1998) 393 n. 26: he is troubled enough by this use of metaphor to suggest that a line might have dropped out and that the chariot imagery should refer to Iris, who has left by the *mēchanē*. However, in the context of this athletic imagery, depicting Lyssa as a charioteer is poetically appropriate.

⁹⁶ We find a similar use of the imagery at Soph. *Phil.* 1039 and Eur. *Hipp.* 1301–3, where the *κέντρον* is used to indicate the gods' power over mortals.

Alectran Gate, which Pindar names as the site of the Games and the sacrifices, was the home of Amphitryon, and the location where the bodies of the children were taken and the site of their cult worship.⁹⁷ Heracles' fantasy, then, is linked to real cult practice relating to the death of his children. However, whereas the cult worship suggests a positive outcome that ultimately emerges from the killings, the inclusion of the Games in *Heracles* simply highlights the horror of the murders. Rather than being an aetiology for the Games, demonstrating how present-day ritual can neutralize the horrors of the heroic past, in Euripides' version the Games are presented as the cause rather than the effect of the child-killing, again highlighting the close connection between *aretē* and the murders.

This irony is brought out by the use of the adjective *καλλίνικος*, which occurs eight times in the play.⁹⁸ It is first used in the opening lines, when Amphitryon explains that it was Heracles and his *καλλίνικον δόρυ* who set up the altar at which the family is crouched in supplication (49); Amphitryon also uses it of Heracles' victory in the battle with the Giants (180), while the Chorus later use it to describe Heracles' prowess (681). The epithet's athletic connotations are brought out when the Chorus describe Heracles' victory over Lycus as a *καλλίνικος ἀγών* (789). The word is also adopted by Heracles himself, who uses it to describe his bow at 570, and of himself at 582:

οὐκ ἂρ' Ἡρακλῆς
ὁ καλλίνικος ὡς πάροιθε λέξομαι. (581–2)

[If I do not manage to save my children] I will no longer be called Heracles *kallinikos*, as I was before.

The use here almost seems to be metapoetic, for the phraseology suggests Heracles knows the phrase as a formulaic one associated with him. It is as though he uses the epithet to denote his awareness of his own status as a cult hero, and the expectations that are therefore laid upon him.

⁹⁷ For the historical cult see Schachter (1981) I. 30–1.

⁹⁸ Shelton (1979) 109–10 sees the adjective as important in emphasizing Heracles' fall from greatness; cf. also Lawler (1948) 254–5.

Καλλίνικος, then, is used to evoke Heracles' *aretē*, and his traditional status as victor and protector. After Heracles is driven mad, however, we find the adjective redeployed, to bring out the irony of his actions. At 961, Heracles once again describes himself as *καλλίνικος*, when he proclaims himself as victor in his imaginary wrestling match, immediately before he turns on the children:

κάνταῦθα γυμνὸν σῶμα θεῖς πορπαμάτων
 πρὸς οὐδέν' ἡμιλλᾶτο κάκηρύσσετο
 αὐτὸς πρὸς αὐτοῦ καλλίνικος οὐδενός,
 ἀκοήν ὑπειπών. (959–62)

Here he removed his garments and stripped naked, he kept competing against no one, and proclaiming himself the triumphant victor over no one, having first commanded a hearing.

Here too the perversion of normal athletic practice is used to highlight Heracles' disastrous actions. The usual activities of the successful athlete are undermined by the repeated insistence that he is competing against no one, in a set of Games which do not exist. These actions thus take on a sinister tone, as we see Heracles using the traditional conventions of an athletic competition to express his delusion. The consequences of this delusion are then made clear, as Heracles turns his strength from imaginary athletics to his supposed punishment of Eurystheus. Again we see Euripides exploiting the contrast between Heracles' glorious strength and the way that strength is used in the play. After the killing is over, the Chorus use the adjective once more as they look upon the sleeping Heracles:

κατὰ σὲ δακρύοις στένω, πρέσβν, καὶ
 τέκεα καὶ τὸ καλλίνικον κάρα. (1045–6)

I mourn with tears for you, old man, and for the children, and for this victorious head.

On the one hand, the adjective is ironic because it is deliberately inappropriate: Heracles is no longer *καλλίνικος*, and the act he has just committed is one of horror, not victory. However, referring to Heracles as *καλλίνικος* in the immediate aftermath of the killings reminds us once more that Heracles' glory and his horrific deeds cannot be so easily separated: it is the fact that he is *καλλίνικος* which

has brought about the tragedy. Again, we are encouraged to connect the epinician and the tragic Heracles, and to see how the latter's failings are simply the mirror image of the former's glory.

The use of the word *καλλίνικος* to explore the nature of *aretē* is particularly effective because of the epithet's ritual associations with Heracles, as well as with athleticism more generally. Using the epithet highlights the contrast between the 'cultic' Heracles the audience knows of from myth, as well as from *epinikion*, and the 'tragic' Heracles they are seeing on-stage. Heracles *καλλίνικος* is a demigod: strong, victorious, and able to protect; the Heracles they are seeing is flawed, vulnerable, and utterly human in his downfall and grief. And while Heracles begins the play as undoubtedly the *καλλίνικος* Heracles of *epinikion*, his attempt to live up to this reputation leads to his downfall.

Divine pride and mortal fall

The theme of *aretē* is linked to another of the play's themes: Heracles' status as semi-divine. Heracles is uniquely situated between mortal and divine spheres: a fact which makes him a complicated tragic hero.⁹⁹ In *Heracles*, the hero's divine future is downplayed: whilst Theseus predicts his cult worship in Athens, there is nothing which overtly suggests Heracles will receive honour different to any other dead hero.¹⁰⁰ However, the ascending level of praise directed at Heracles across the choral odes portrays him more as god than man. Praising Heracles as though he possessed godlike powers highlights his actual status in the play. The audience may know that Heracles becomes a god in the future, but he is not yet divine; rather, he is about to do and suffer the worst things that mortal men can.

⁹⁹ Silk (1985) 5; Padilla (1998) 20–2.

¹⁰⁰ Meridor (1984) 206–7 argues that the play contains subtle allusions to Heracles' future apotheosis: for example that the Chorus's desire for two youths alludes to Heracles' later marriage to Hebe. However, it is nevertheless striking that the overt discussion of Heracles' future contains no ambiguity as we find at the end of *Trachiniae*.

This language is particularly forceful in the third stasimon where Heracles' victory over Lycus is depicted as divine retribution.¹⁰¹ Within the play this unbridled praise creates an ironic effect, exalting Heracles only to see him crushed. We find similar ideas in the other two stasima. In the first stasimon, the theme is introduced by the Chorus's uncertainty as to whether they should praise Heracles as the son of Amphitryon or as the son of Zeus (353–4). The Chorus may appear to be simply hedging their bets, but in fact this indecision is thematically relevant to the ode's epinician material, as Heracles' divine or mortal status is significant in determining the type of song the Chorus can sing. Heracles is felt to hover between the divine and mortal spheres, but the type of language that can be addressed to a god is quite different from what can be said of a mortal victor. Heracles' transgression of boundaries is also indicated by the mingling of paeanic and hymnic material into the second and third stasimon respectively. In the second stasimon, the Chorus draw a parallel between their own singing of a praise-song and Apollo's singing of *paianes* (348–51) and then go on to compare themselves to the Delian girls who perform a *paian* in honour of the god (687–700).¹⁰² In the third stasimon, Heracles is presented as a divine avenger, and the city and his birth and deeds are celebrated as though the Chorus were singing a religious narrative (798–814). The inclusion of language from these religious genres further highlights the absence of any warning to a mortal victor: for as the recipient of an *epinikion* Heracles is a mortal man, but as the recipient of a *paian* or *hymnos* he is by implication divine. Heracles' transgression is thus encapsulated by the mingling of the normally discrete categories, a technique which would have alerted the audience to the danger he is in.

In this context, it is noticeable that despite the play's detailed engagement with epinician *topoi*, one theme of *epinikion* is entirely missing: what we might call the 'watch out' motif. Epinician victors are constantly reminded of their mortal status, and warned not to

¹⁰¹ As Burnett (1971) 167–8 notes, however, Heracles' actions are not in fact divine but mortal vengeance, and as such they are a lot more questionable; the Chorus's language of praise is thus misplaced; cf. also Papadopoulou (2005) 41–2.

¹⁰² Rutherford (1995a) 124–5; Papadopoulou (2005) 46–7.

become too proud, or think that their victory counts as anything too much.¹⁰³ The praise of Heracles omits any mention of this idea, and this ties into the way Heracles is presented as godlike in the odes. The relevance of this *topos*, however, is indisputable, for its theme is implicit in the play as a whole, and we see its moral being played out in front of our eyes. It is Heracles' superlative status that leads to his fall, as Iris explains:

γνῶ μὲν τὸν Ἥρας οἶός ἐστ' αὐτῷ χόλος,
μάθη δὲ τὸν ἐμόν' ἢ θεοὶ μὲν οὐδαμοῦ,
τὰ θνητὰ δ' ἔσται μεγάλα, μὴ δόντος δίκην. (840–2)

So that he may know the nature of Hera's anger against him and he may learn mine. Otherwise, if he does not pay the penalty, the gods are of no account, and it will be mortals who are great.

Commentators have sometimes felt that the gods' anger with Heracles is presented as arbitrary and unmotivated.¹⁰⁴ However, Iris in fact makes clear why Heracles is being punished, outlining an opposition between gods and men.¹⁰⁵ Heracles' divine characteristics threaten to undermine the starkness of this opposition, and so the gods assert their power by bringing him down to the level of any other man. Thus it is the lack of moderation in the praise directed at Heracles which leads to his ruin: a concern regularly expressed by *epinikion*, which stresses the gulf between mortals and gods and reminds its *laudandus* of the insecurity of his position. The praise of Heracles evokes his epinician persona, where he really is a god, and so can operate as a foil to the mortal victor. However, within the world of the play, Heracles is simply a man, and hence should be portrayed like any other epinician *laudandus* and reminded of his limitations. As Pindar or Bacchylides might warn their patrons, Heracles rises too high and is praised too much, and as a result, his fall is terrible.

¹⁰³ e.g. Pind. *Ol.* 1.30–4, *Pyth.* 3.80–3, 7.14–18, 10.19–29, *Isth.* 3.1–6, 17–28, 4.33–7, 5.13–16, 8.14–16; Bacchyl. 3.74–82, 5.50–5, 9.88–92, 10.45–7, 14.1–6.

¹⁰⁴ e.g. Ehrenberg (1946) 161–4; Conacher (1955); Kamerbeek (1966) 9–10; Hartigan (1987) 127–8.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Burnett (1971) 177–82; Silk (1985) 14; Papadopoulou (2005) 93.

This observation also highlights an additional dimension to tragedy's use of lyric, since it shows that once a genre has been evoked in sufficient depth, what is omitted can be as significant as what is present. For a Greek audience, hearing an epinician-style ode which lacks any moderation to its unbridled praise would be a worrying effect, because of the religious dimension to this motif. Once the audience is attuned to interpret tragic odes through the codes of a lyric genre, omitting a motif which is expected to be present can play the same role as a direct inversion of generic conventions.

Nostos

The use of epinician language is particularly relevant in a play which centres on a hero's *nostos*, for one of the functions of an epinician ode is to facilitate the smooth reintegration of the returning victor into his community.¹⁰⁶ The Greeks perceived the act of winning at the Games to be an alienating as well as a glorious one. Athletic victors are felt to be different from other mortals: hence the potential for their heroization.¹⁰⁷ This sense that they are somehow more than mortal is also expressed by reported traditions such as the breaking down of a section of city wall in order to allow them in.¹⁰⁸ Athletes were able to use their new status for political means, for example the story that Glaucus of Carystus became governor of Camarina because of his renown as a boxer.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless, stories such as Cylon's attempted tyranny at Athens also demonstrate the double-edged nature of athletic success in Greek eyes.¹¹⁰ An athlete's reintegration into his community is therefore an occasion of great rejoicing, but also one fraught with hazards: both the potential threat he now poses

¹⁰⁶ See Kurke (1991) 15–34 on the significance of *nostos* in *epinikion*.

¹⁰⁷ The closest connection between *epinikion* and hero-cult is made by Currie (2005), who sees heroization as crucial to epinician song and athletic success.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Diod. Sic. 12.82, 13.34, 13.82. The story in Plut. *Lyc.* 22.2 that the Spartan kings surrounded themselves with athletic victors in battle also suggests a special and lucky status.

¹⁰⁹ Schol. Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 190; Bekker, *Anecd. Gr.* 1.232. For other stories of athletes going on to political success cf. Hdt. 6.92, 8.47; Diod. 12.9.5–6, Plut. *Alex.* 34.2.

¹¹⁰ Hdt. 5.71; Thuc. 1.126. Another example is Alcibiades (see pp. 115–17 above).

to the wider group, and the potential envy that he faces from less fortunate citizens.

This motif is particularly relevant in the context of Heracles, for as we have seen, it is the lack of moderation in the praise directed at Heracles' *nostos* which culminates in his destruction. Heracles' *nostos* is built up by the Chorus's belief that he can save his family: the first half of the play relies on creating suspense as we wait to see whether the hero's return will take place in time to save the children. The *nostos* then becomes the emotional heart of the play, as we see it bring about first salvation, and then destruction. Heracles is driven mad before he can complete the rituals symbolizing his safe return: the *nostos* is thus derailed at the last minute, and Heracles destroys his household before he is fully returned to it.¹¹¹ Essentially then, the concern which *epinikion* seeks to allay is played out within the tragedy. The greatness of Heracles' achievements precludes a successful *nostos*, and his reintegration into his old life is a failure. Here too we can observe a parallel with *Trachiniae*, a play which also centres on a failed and destructive *nostos*, and one which is anticipated and celebrated throughout the play.¹¹² In both plays the emphasis placed on Heracles' return makes the emotional impact of his destruction particularly powerful, and in both cases the plays' use of epinician imagery adds further dimension to this theme.

The hero and the *polis*: reintegrating *epinikion*

Heracles therefore exploits its protagonist's presentation in *epinikion* in order to portray the dangers of excessive praise. The Heracles of *epinikion* is divine and so a suitable focus for such language, but the Heracles of tragedy is a mortal man, and treating him like his epinician alter-ego leads to disaster. Heracles' story embodies the warnings of *epinikion*: it demonstrates the risks of forgetting one's mortality, and highlights the fragility of a heroic *nostos*. Yet the play also undermines epinician values, by presenting heroic *aretē* as a

¹¹¹ See Foley (1985) 152–3 on the perversion of the ritual moment.

¹¹² Indeed, Silk (1985) 3 also notes that Heracles and Deianeira's failure even to meet adds particular emphasis to the theme of the perverted *nostos*.

destructive rather than praiseworthy force. After Heracles recognizes what he has done, he assimilates the children's murder to his other labours, describing the children's deaths as an *ἀγών* (1229) and the last in the series of heroic *πόννοι* (1279–80).¹¹³ His final words in the play also suggest this rejection of the conventional and epinician associations of *aretē*:

ὅστις δὲ πλοῦτον ἢ σθένος μᾶλλον φίλων
ἀγαθῶν πεπᾶσθαι βούλεται κακῶς φρονεῖ. (1425–6)

Whoever wishes to acquire wealth or strength rather than good friends is a fool.

As various scholars have noted, these lines underscore the play's emphasis on *philia* as a redeeming force lacked by the gods.¹¹⁴ However, the way *philia* is described here goes beyond a simple *gnōmē*. As we have already seen, comparisons between wealth and other forms of *aretē* are a *topos* of *epinikion*, and the standard conclusion is that athletic success is the highest good. This idea has already been introduced into the play by the Chorus's preference for youthful *aretē* over wealth, which follows conventional epinician ideology (637–54). In the aftermath of the killing, Heracles has come to deplore his own strength, which he sees to be responsible for the destruction of his family. Thus the Chorus's assumptions about physical prowess are shown to be misguided. Heracles' final words, therefore, show how the play has renegotiated conventional values regarding *aretē*: individual attributes such as wealth and strength are shown to be less important than more corporate values, in particular the support of *φίλοι*.¹¹⁵ The importance of one's personal ties (both to relatives and to the wider community) is of course a commonplace of *epinikion*, but the prioritization of friendship over

¹¹³ Cf. Barlow (1982) 122. See Willink (1988) on the irony of the double-meaning of *πόννος* ('noble toil' and 'wretched toil').

¹¹⁴ e.g. Conacher (1955) 149; Hartigan (1987) 129. For recent discussions of the theme see Johnson (2002); Griffiths (2006) ch. 8.

¹¹⁵ The theme of friendship vs. wealth and strength was first noted by Sheppard (1916); he, however, conceptualizes it as a conflict between true and false goods, as opposed to civic and personal ones.

personal success is a moral derived from the suffering of Heracles, and one alien to epinician values.

Philia is often felt to be an aristocratic force, derived from the relationships between noble houses.¹¹⁶ In *Heracles*, however, *philia* turns out to have a more community-minded focus, as demonstrated by Heracles' incorporation into Athens.¹¹⁷ In persuading Heracles to come with him, Theseus tells him that his arrival in Athens will be a *stephanos* for the city:

καλὸς γὰρ ἀστοῖς στέφανος Ἑλλήνων ὕπο
 ἄνδρ' ἐσθλὸν ὠφελοῦντας εὐκλείας τυχεῖν. (1334–5)

It will be a fine crown for my citizens to win from the Greeks, to get glory by helping a good man.

The *philia* between Theseus and Heracles is thus presented as a socially integrative force, and one which benefits both great individuals and the wider community. The glory that Heracles can confer is portrayed in athletic terms once more, and understood as equivalent to an athletic crown. Again, we see a reworking of epinician motifs to fit in with the values implicit in the end of the play. As in *epinikion*, there is a connection between the greatness of the successful individual and the *eukleia* he can bring to the community. However, the relationship is changed: it is now the community that wins *eukleia* in its own right, rather than merely by the reflected glory of the individual's deeds. Part of the *eukleia* to be gained comes from Heracles' greatness, part of it comes from the ability of the *polis* to protect

¹¹⁶ Cf. e.g. the story that Cleon formally renounced his friends upon entering politics and instead portrayed himself as a lover of the *dēmos* (Plut. *Praec. Ger. Reip.* 806f–807b; Aristoph. *Knights* 743, 1330–4). Connor (1971) 87–198 argues that late 5th-cent. politicians were increasingly reluctant to exploit *philia* and appealed to the people directly; see also Blundell (1989) 50.

¹¹⁷ Dunn (1997) 103–4 is concerned that Theseus comes simply as a friend and lacks explicit political authority. However, the association between Theseus and the Athenian *polis* would have been strong in the audience's minds (cf. his proto-democratic sons in Eur. *Hcl.*), and there is no suggestion that Theseus is acting without the city's support: indeed, his concern for his citizens' well-being as well as Heracles mark him out as a good king. Thus, the focus on Theseus as friend rather than king highlights the theme of *philia* working to the benefit of individuals and community.

and support the individual. Above all, it is now the ordinary citizens, not Heracles, who are in a position to achieve this *eukleia*.¹¹⁸

A similar reassessment of traditional language takes place with the word *ἔσθλός*. Calling Heracles *ἔσθλός* (1335) is suggestive of a set of traditional aristocratic values, and connecting this with *eukleia* further buys into the ideology associated with them. But here the political overtones of the word are modified: by incorporating the vocabulary into the means of winning glory for the *polis*, its aristocratic connotations are redeployed towards a social good. The figure of Heracles shows the dangers of excessive individual greatness, but also hints at a way it can instead fulfil a positive role. The language of *epinikion*, which is associated with an aristocratic milieu, but recognizable to the audience, is effective shorthand for expressing this cluster of concepts. *Heracles* explores the darker side of competitive *aretē*, and the play culminates in a praise of more community-focused virtues. If the epinician language in the choral odes created an ironic contrast between the ideals of the genre and its outcome in the play, the allusions at the end of the play suggest a more positive outcome, showing how the values inherent in *epinikion* can be redeployed in a way suitable for a fifth-century *polis*.

Theseus also announces that after his death Heracles will be honoured with hero cult, so that honouring him becomes a civic function:

θανόντα δ', εὖτ' ἂν εἰς Ἅιδου μόλῃς,
 θυσίαισι λαῖνοισί τ' ἐξογκώμασιν
 τίμιον ἀνάξει πᾶσ' Ἀθηναίων πόλις. (1331–3)

And when you die and go to Hades, the whole city of the Athenians will raise your honour high with sacrifices and monuments of stone.

Cult aetiologies are common at the end of Euripides' plays, and the ritual honour can be understood as compensation for the suffering

¹¹⁸ Papadopoulou (2005) 166–7 argues that Heracles' military language and fear of cowardice suggests that there is no change in his concept of *aretē*. However, this language can just as well be understood as indicating the development in *aretē*: the more corporate values at the end of the play are described in the same terms as the individual prowess earlier, which suggests that Heracles' previous interpretation of *aretē* can be incorporated into this new system.

Heracles has endured on earth. As in other Euripidean plays, the faults of the mythological world are corrected in cult: thus Hippolytus' incorporation into a marriage-cult compensates for his inability to handle sexuality in life (*Hipp.* 1423–30), while Iphigeneia is promised a peaceful cult of Artemis to counter the bloodthirsty rites at Tauris (*IT* 1462–7).¹¹⁹ Here, Heracles' greatness, which turned out to be a source of destruction in life, is presented once again as a source of glory after his death, aligning him with many tragic heroes whose excessive nature can only be handled within the safety of ritual.¹²⁰ Viewed through the filter of *epinikion*, however, the resonances of this passage may go even beyond this. Bruno Currie has argued that *epinikion* can anticipate the posthumous heroization of the *laudandus*, and thus the poetry is part of a wider cultural pattern connecting the praise of an exceptional person during their lifetime with their cult after death.¹²¹ If we accept this general principle, the process that Heracles undergoes could be understood as an aetiology not only for his own cult, but for *epinikion* in general. This is particularly striking if we accept the view that the *καλλίνικος* song is one of the cult hymns to Heracles from which *epinikia* developed.¹²² The ending of *Heracles*, then, shows the destruction of a great individual, but the compensation it offers is the creation of a system which can prevent similar disasters in the future: a healthy relationship between individual and community where both are protected and benefited.

While the relationship between elite individual and wider group was an issue in any Greek *polis*, it was an area of particular tension in Athens. In terms of cult, this is reflected by the Athenian tendency not to heroize contemporary individuals.¹²³ Effectively,

¹¹⁹ I discuss both these passages in later chapters: see pp. 216–18 and 278. Dunn (1996) 118 sees Heracles' future honour as problematic, given the horror of his immediate actions and his own rejection of his past heroism. However, cult worship is frequently felt to be a neutralizing force for the horrors of the past: see Foley (1985) 166–7; Mikalson (1991). Indeed we know that the murder of Heracles' children was in fact a focus of cult (Pind. *Isth.* 4.63–4 discussed above).

¹²⁰ Cf. Seaford (1994); Allan (2008) 64–5.

¹²¹ Currie (2005). See 406–14 for an overview of the argument.

¹²² See Currie (2005) 408; Robbins (1997) 244; Race (1986) 24; Fowler (1987) 100.

¹²³ Currie (2005) 147–8, 154.

then, *Heracles* represents a renegotiation of epinician values by the fifth-century *polis* in general, and the Athenian *polis* more specifically, exemplified by the incorporation of *epinikion* into the public and democratic genre of tragedy.¹²⁴ The recipient of the *epinikion* is not a contemporary figure with threatening aristocratic overtones, but a mythological hero. The genre is brought back to its religious roots, and any political overtones are effaced. Moreover, this idea is strengthened by the shift in power balance between individual and city: *Heracles* is incorporated into the *polis* as a response to a catastrophe rather than a success, and the emphasis is on the role of the community to protect individuals, rather than their capacity to glorify it.

EURIPIDES' *ELECTRA*

If the *Heracles* uses *epinikion* to suggest the benefits of corporate over individualistic values, *Electra* uses it to explore the genre's aristocratic associations. *Electra* is rich in epinician imagery, but rather than being spread throughout the play, the imagery is clustered around one moment: the killing of Aegisthus.¹²⁵ The implication of using such language to describe Aegisthus' death (and, conversely, the implication of *not* using it of Clytemnestra's) is connected to the broader issue of the morality of the killings as Euripides presents them, and the way Orestes and Electra are presented in the play.¹²⁶ Several scholars writing on the play have felt that *Electra* takes the grand heroic world of myth and presents it as degraded and ordinary, and moreover that Electra and Orestes are presented not as noble avengers but as petty figures demonstrating the negative aspects of

¹²⁴ As I argue in Ch. 2, scholars who see tragedy as fundamentally non-democratic fail to engage with the genre's intimate associations with Athens.

¹²⁵ For a thorough discussion of this imagery, see Myrick (1993) 138–41.

¹²⁶ Zeitlin (1970) 659–60 also suggests that the athletic language is linked to the festival of the Argive Heraea, which the Chorus try to persuade Electra to participate in at the start of the play.

personalized vengeance.¹²⁷ As in *Heracles*, the use of epinician language evokes a particular set of heroic and aristocratic associations, and the actions of the characters are thus set against this epinician template.

Like *Heracles*, *Orestes* has a previous existence as an athletic figure, and he is repeatedly described through athletic imagery in all the tragedies that deal with his myth (discussed in more detail below). The tradition of *Orestes* as athlete can be used to create a variety of effects, as the poets tap into the range of associations athleticism can carry. In *Electra*, the epinician language therefore takes on an additional significance because of this pre-existing tradition, for the audience is encouraged to consider the imagery in the light of its previous incarnations.

Aegisthus and Clytemnestra

Athletic imagery enters the play as a way of describing Aegisthus' murder. *Orestes*' first response to the old man's suggestion that he kill Aegisthus and Clytemnestra is to couch it in athletic language, calling it a *στέφανος* (614). *Orestes* and *Electra* then maintain this imagery in the way they speak about the act, calling it an *ἀγών* (751) and an *ἀγώνισμα* (987), culminating in the metaphor of a wrestling fall, which *Electra* uses to imagine *Orestes*' possible death in the approaching fight (*εἰ παλαισθεῖς πτώμα θανάσιμον πεσῇ*, 686). With such a build-up of athletic language, when the killings are described as a *νίκη* (591, 675), it is athletic victory that we are likely to have in mind.

The description of Aegisthus' death draws on this strand of imagery, presenting the fulfilment of the killing as an athletic success. *Orestes*' cover story is that he and his companions are Thessalians on their way to compete at Olympia (named periphrastically by its river, in epinician fashion), thus making athletics central to the way the plan is enacted (*πρὸς δ' Ἀλφειὸν / θύσσοντες ἐρχόμεσθ' Ὀλυμπίῳ Δί,*

¹²⁷ Cf. e.g. Denniston (1939, repr. 1968) xii–xiii; Conacher (1967) 205–10; Knox (1979) 254; King (1980) 195–6; Arnott (1981). Gellie (1981) takes a similar line but suggests that the devalued world is intrinsically an 'untragic' one.

781–2). As the moment for the killing approaches, athletic imagery is used of Orestes himself, when his sacrifice of the calf is compared to a runner on a race-track:

θάσσον δὲ βύρσαν ἐξέδειρεν ἢ δρομεὺς
 δισοῦνς διαύλους ἱππίους διήνυσεν,
 κἀνεῖτο λαγόνας. (824–6)

He stripped off the hide more quickly than a runner can complete two laps of the hippodrome, and he laid open the flanks.

The simile is at first sight bizarre, since the activities of sacrifice and athletics have no obvious point of comparison. In fact, however, the sacrifice of the calf foreshadows the murder of Aegisthus, linking into the tragic *topos* whereby murder is couched in the language of ritual sacrifice.¹²⁸ The athletic language thus also becomes more intelligible, as an athletic simile is used to symbolize an equivalent act of physical endeavour: indeed, the imagery is rooted in the tradition of conceptualizing Orestes' killings as athletic activity, discussed in more detail below. Applying this imagery to the sacrifice, however, adds a note of discomfort to the way the murder is portrayed, for we are encouraged to focus on Orestes' impiety rather than the justice of his actions.¹²⁹ The ethical complexities of the murder are further enhanced by the method of the killing itself, for Aegisthus is himself butchered like a sacrificial cow: he is stunned on the back of the neck; he quivers like a victim as he falls (842–3).¹³⁰ Orestes kills him with the same butcher's cleaver he has used to carve the meat (837–8), and the same verb is used of his smashing of the calf's breast-bone and his smashing of Aegisthus' spine (*ἀναρρήξαι*, 837, *ἔρρηξεν*, 842). Orestes earlier assimilated athletics and sacrifice in his cover story, describing

¹²⁸ See Burkert (1966a); Casabona (1966); Guépin (1968) 1–5; Henrichs (2000) 187.

¹²⁹ Cf. Easterling (1988), who also suggests (104) that Aegisthus' cry as he is murdered suggests the inauspicious omen of a sacrificial victim crying out.

¹³⁰ Cf. Cropp (1988) 154; Porter (1990). Lloyd (1986b) argues that since participating in a sacrifice did not make you sacrosanct yourself we should not be concerned about the nature of the killing, but Euripides has surely gone out of his way to present the murder as gruesome and problematic. Moreover, the image recalls the similar image applied to Agamemnon's murder by Aegisthus in the *Odyssey*, where he also falls like a butchered ox (4.535, 11.411).

their purpose in travelling to the Olympic Games as 'to sacrifice to Olympian Zeus' (782). The sacrifice to Olympian Zeus recalls Orestes' earlier prayer to Zeus as he prepares himself to undertake the murders (ω Ζεῦ πατρῶε καὶ τροπαί' ἐχθρῶν ἐμῶν, 671). We are therefore confronted with a sacrifice which is likened to an athletic act, and to a murder which is likened to a sacrifice, ensuring that illegitimate and ritual killings are bound into the same nexus of imagery as athleticism and physical endeavour. This theme is further enhanced by the household's response to Aegisthus' murder, as Orestes is wreathed with garlands (στέφουσι δ' εὐθὺς σοῦ κασιγνήτου κᾶρα / χαίροντες ἀλαλάζοντες, 854–5). The wearing of garlands is appropriate to celebrate both an athletic victory and a sacrifice, while the word ἀλαλάζω can be used both of cries of victory and of ritual cries.¹³¹

Euripides thus uses athletic imagery in general to build up the associations of the killing with sporting achievement. We find more specific evocation of *epinikion* itself in the choral passage at 860 ff., where the Chorus rejoice at the news of Aegisthus' death:

θεὸς ἐς χορόν, ω φίλα, ἔχνος, ὡς νεβρὸς οὐράνιον
 πῆδημα κουφίζουσα σὺν ἀγλαΐᾳ.
 νικᾷ στεφαναφόρα κρείσσω τῶν παρ' Ἀλφειοῦ
 ῥέεθροις τελέσας
 κασίγνητος σέθεν· ἀλλ' ὑπάειδε
 καλλίνικον ὧδ' ἀν' ἐμῷ χορῷ. (860–5)

Set your step to the dance, dear friend, like a fawn leaping lightly up to heaven with joy. Your brother has achieved a crown-bearing victory greater than those by the streams of Alpheus. Come; sing a glorious victory-song to accompany my dance.

The allusion here is, in part, a metrical one, for the passage is dactylo-epitrite, the metre of *epinikion*. Dactylo-epitrite is found elsewhere in tragedy, but its use in a passage with such strong epinician connections is no coincidence, and as we have already seen, it is sometimes used in choral odes with a function of praise. The metrical resonance is enhanced by strong verbal cues. Orestes' triumph is explicitly

¹³¹ For the ritual use, cf. Eur. *Bacch.* 593, 1133; for a victory cry in general cf. Soph. *Ant.* 133.

called a victory in the crown games. Moreover, his victory is compared to, and portrayed as greater than, an Olympic victory, while Olympia itself is described periphrastically in epinician style. The Chorus describe their own song as a *kallinikos* song, again appropriating the idea that they are celebrating an athletic triumph. The suggestion that Orestes' victory calls for a song and accompanying choral dance is also epinician in ethos, for it evokes the *topos* that praise-song is a central part of the recognition of the victor's *aretē*. Finally, there may be a more specific allusion in the simile which begins the ode. As we have seen, using a simile to begin an ode, before clarifying that the comparison is to an athletic victory, is a common epinician trope.¹³² Moreover, this particular simile (of a fawn leaping), as Cropp notes in his commentary, is one used by Bacchylides in a surviving piece of *epinikion* (866–76: 13.84–90).¹³³

The Chorus's attempt to perform an epinician ode is interrupted by Electra, but her speech also reflects the language of *epinikion*:

ὦ φέγγος, ὦ τέθριππον ἡλίου σέλας,
 ὦ γαῖα καὶ νύξ ἣν ἐδερχόμην πάρος,
 νῦν ὄμμα τοῦμόν ἀμπτυχαί τ' ἐλεύθεροι,
 ἐπεὶ πατὴρ πέπτωκεν Αἴγισθος φονεύς.
 φέρ', οἷα δὴ ἔχω καὶ δόμοι κεύθουσί μου
 κόμης ἀγάλματ' ἐξενέγκωμεν, φίλαι,
 στέψω τ' ἀδελφοῦ κρᾶτα τοῦ νικηφόρου. (866–72)

O light, O chariot-drawn beam of the sun, O earth and night which I looked upon before, now my eyes open in freedom, since Aegisthus, murderer of my father, has fallen. Come, my friends, let us bring out the adornments for the hair which I possess and my house contains. I will crown the head of my victorious brother.

Electra's opening words are an address to the sun as a charioteer (866); coming in a context where athletic language is so prevalent, this imagery takes on a significance which is more than simply conventional. Indeed, the chariot of the sun is specifically a *τέθριππος*, the type of racing chariot used at the Games. The sun is addressed as a saviour, drawing on the associations between light and

¹³² e.g. Pind. *Ol.* 6, 7, *Nem.* 5, *Isth.* 6.

¹³³ Cropp (1988) on 860–1.

safety, which are so standard that the word *φάος* can be used to mean both. On a human level, the agent of Electra's salvation is Orestes, who is also described in terms of athleticism, just as the sun is described both as a saviour and a charioteer. The focus, therefore, shifts back to Orestes, as Electra imagines crowning his head with a garland (871–2), and calls him *νικηφόρος*, an image which suggests the treatment of the victor at the end of the race.

The return to choral lyrics continues this theme, as the Chorus imagine both Electra's and their own role in the victory celebrations:

σὺ μὲν νῦν ἀγάλματ' ἄειρε κρατὶ· τὸ δ' ἄμετερον
χωρήσεται Μούσαισι χόρευμα φίλον.
νῦν οἱ πάρος ἁμετέρας γαίης τυραννεύσουσι φίλοι βασιλῆς
δικαίως, τοὺς ἀδίκους καθελόντες.
ἀλλ' ἔγω ξύναυλος βοᾷ χαρᾷ. (873–9)

It is for you to place adornment on his head; our dance, dear to the Muses, will continue. Now, those who were previously our dear kings will rule our land justly, having destroyed the unjust ones. But let the shout accompanied by joy go up.

Reaffirming the choral dance as part of the tribute paid to the victor again draws on the way that epinician choruses envisage their performance as integral to the victor's honour. The Muses are evoked to assist with the final climax of praise, while the stanza ends with a moral about politics and governance: the tyrants have been overthrown and replaced by good kings (877–8).¹³⁴

As the ode ends, the victors arrive on-stage, and are greeted and crowned by Electra, who continues to draw upon epinician motifs in her praise of them:

ὦ καλλίνικε, πατρὸς ἐκ νικηφόρου
γεγώς, Ὀρέστα, τῆς ὑπ' Ἰλίου μάχης,
δέξαι κόμης σῆς βοστρούχων ἀνδήματα.
ἦκεις γὰρ οὐκ ἀχρεῖον ἔκπλεθρον δραμῶν
ἀγῶν' ἐς οἴκους ἀλλὰ πολέμιον κτανῶν
Αἰγισθον, ὃς σὸν πατέρα κάμὸν ὤλεσεν.
σύ τ', ὦ παρασπίστ', ἀνδρὸς εὐσεβεστάτου

¹³⁴ For the Muses in *epinikion*, see Parry (1965) 370. Pind. *Ol.* 9.86, 13.92, and *Pyth.* 1.58 evoke the Muses at the same position in the ode.

παίδευμα, Πυλάδῃ, στέφανον ἔξ ἐμῆς χερὸς
 δέχου· φέρῃ γὰρ καὶ σὺ τῷδ' ἴσον μέρος
 ἁγῶνος. αἰεὶ δ' εὐτυχεῖς φαίνοισθέ μοι. (880–9)

Kallinikos, born of a father victorious in the battle beneath Troy, Orestes, receive this binding for the curls of your hair. You have come home not having run in a six-plethra run that was useless, but having killed our enemy Aegisthus, who killed your father and mine. And you, Pylades, his companion in arms, pupil of a most pious father, receive this garland from my hand, for you also bear an equal share in the contest. May you both always seem fortunate in my eyes.

As Orestes enters, he is addressed as *kallinikos*, as though he were an Olympic victor. As well as naming him, Electra refers to his heritage, and his father's history of success (880–1), just as Pindar's victors are praised by reference to their pedigree.¹³⁵ Agamemnon's victory is in fact a military one, but the interposing of Orestes' name delays the clarification of precisely how he is victorious, encouraging us to infer momentarily that Agamemnon too is an athletic victor. The epinician imagery is then evoked still more overtly: presenting Orestes with (another) wreath, Electra compares the murder to an athletic victory, and Orestes to a successful runner. Similarly, Pylades is praised through his family heritage, and crowned for his role in what is once again called an ἁγών. The moment of garland-giving is itself a focus of *epinikion*, and so Electra's use of athletic language as she crowns Orestes and Pylades further alerts us to the relevance of the genre.¹³⁶

The killing of Aegisthus, then, is systematically presented as an athletic triumph, with a clustering of language and imagery recalling *epinikion*. However, the positive associations which this type of language carries with it are undermined by the way the killing itself is described.¹³⁷ Aegisthus treats his guests with appropriate respect and invites them to join in the religious act he is performing. While

¹³⁵ See Golden (1998) 108–9 for athletic pedigree and the fathers of victors.

¹³⁶ For garland-giving as a focal moment in *epinikion* cf. Pind. *Ol.* 3.6, 4.23, 6.26, 8.76, 10.61, *Pyth.* 2.6, 3.73, 9.124, 11.14, *Nem.* 2.22, 5.5, 9.53, 10.26, *Isth.* 1.10, 3.11, 5.8, 62, 7.51, 8.67; Bacchyl. 2.10, 4.16, 6.8, 7.11, 11.19, and see Blech (1982) 145–53.

¹³⁷ Arnott (1981) 188–9 also notes the build-up of athletic imagery, and the ironic effect it achieves.

Aegisthus is still the guilty party, this deliberate attempt to present him in a pleasant light muddies our emotional response to Orestes' victory even if we still perceive his actions as just ones. Similarly, rather than confronting Aegisthus directly, Orestes carries out a stealth assassination, which means Aegisthus is not given the opportunity to recognize that justice is being performed.¹³⁸ A tension is created, then, between the values inherent in the imagery used to imagine the killing, and the way that the killing is actually described. We are left with the impression that something is not right, either with the values themselves, or the way that they are enacted.¹³⁹

Orestes' initial description of the killings as a *στέφανος* (614) incorporated Clytemnestra's murder as well as Aegisthus'. We are therefore likely to expect similar imagery surrounding the second death, and anticipate a climax of praise and joy, immediately before the inevitable arrival of the Furies. In fact, though, the killing of Clytemnestra is presented very differently from that of Aegisthus: the death is construed first as a sacrifice (*θύσεις γὰρ οἶα χρή σε δαίμοσιν θύῃ*, 1141) then simply as a brutal murder. The earlier clustering of sacrificial and athletic imagery might lead us to expect further such metaphors here, but in fact the epinician imagery that ran through the presentation of Aegisthus' murder is now conspicuous by its absence. The shift in imagery is matched by a shift in tone, for Electra and Orestes' response is not triumph but horror and regret.¹⁴⁰

Moreover, as in *Heracles*, *Electra* draws upon the epinician theme of *nostos* to explore ideas surrounding Orestes' homecoming. In Orestes' case the usual order of events is inverted. Rather than returning from a victory, Orestes' *nostos* is undergone in order to achieve a victory, and the athletic language is used to describe not

¹³⁸ Cropp (1988) on 774–858 stresses Aegisthus' moral guilt but nevertheless recognizes that the murder is presented as problematic.

¹³⁹ Adkins (1960) 176–8 outlines the way moral terms are used in the play. For a reading of *Electra* in terms of a tension between heroic and 5th-cent. values, see Arnott (1981). For a counter-view, see Lloyd (1986b).

¹⁴⁰ O'Brien (1964) 23–4 observes that the crowning-motif repeatedly draws our attention to Orestes' head, to anticipate his claim at 1195 that his head is now polluted and cannot be looked at. We see a similar motif at Aeschin. *Ctes.* 212, where the orator contrasts the crowning of Demosthenes with the pollution on his head.

what he did while abroad but his actions on returning to his city. Equally, while *epinikion* uses the *laudandus*' activities while away to facilitate his return to the city, the end of the play makes it clear that rather than undergoing a true *nostos*, Orestes will leave once again (1250–1). Once more we see an exploration of the fears that surround the victor's *nostos* and his reintegration into the community. The athletic language anticipates the deed which will make Orestes' reintegration into his community impossible. In doing so it draws on the fears that surrounded the return of a successful athlete, yet also perverts the function of epinician song, presenting it as part of the problem rather than as a solution. The disappearance of athletic imagery from the second killing highlights this issue, as we are encouraged to see Orestes' actions no longer as athletic achievements but as a polluting matricide. Thus Orestes' abortive return to Argos represents yet another way in which the play twists epinician imagery to achieve an uncomfortable effect.

The language of athletic achievement re-enters the play in the context of Orestes' punishment, but the tone and associations of such imagery are now changed. At 1264 his trial is described as a running-race (ἐνταῦθα καὶ σὲ δεῖ δραμεῖν φόνου πέρι): the athletic language is now used to suggest the exhaustion and dangers of sporting endeavour, rather than its triumphal outcome. Similarly, the requirement that Orestes found a city by the river Alpheus also triggers Olympic associations (1273–4), but here the context is one of atonement, not glory. This renegotiation of athletic language is indicative of the play's shift in tone: just as the siblings first perceive their vengeance as justice and then later as murder, so too the athletic imagery is first introduced as triumphant, but later re-emerges in a more downbeat way. Whilst the play acknowledges that Orestes will ultimately be acquitted, the emotional focus of the ending is on the suffering of the siblings, not on their ultimate salvation. Thus, the associations of *epinikion* now take on a different meaning. Reintroducing the athletic language in a context that acknowledges the murders were a crime reminds us of the triumphalism evoked by Aegisthus' death, but suggests that this too was misplaced.

The epinician language is further relevant to the play's interest in issues surrounding nobility, wealth, and other forms of 'goodness'. Orestes foregrounds these themes in his speech upon meeting the

Peasant, when he discusses the impossibility of discerning a man's character from external criteria alone (367–400) and concludes that the Peasant is noble (*ἄριστος*, 382) despite his poverty and low birth. This motif re-enters the play when the Old Man comments that there is no automatic correspondence between high birth and nobility of character and suggests that someone can simultaneously be *εὐγενής* and *κακός* (550–2). Electra also draws on these themes in her attack on the dead Aegisthus, when she accuses him of prizing wealth above all else, and not giving sufficient weight to the importance of *physis* (938–44).¹⁴¹ As we have already seen, *epinikion* frequently engages with these moral definitions, separating out wealth, birth, and athletic *aretē* (see pp. 129–30 above). Nevertheless, the stance taken by Orestes and the Old Man is different from conventional epinician ideology in the marked separation of moral qualities from traditional aristocratic values. Whereas *epinikion* upholds the ideology of the aristocratic victor, presenting *aretē*, wealth, and family as significant human achievements, *Electra* takes an ostentatiously democratic line, emphasizing the contribution poor and lowly individuals can make to the moral community. Moreover, we see a further complication of the ethical norms as Aegisthus turns out to be a pious man and good host, as well as an adulterer and murderer, and Clytemnestra expresses her remorse for killing Agamemnon, as well as explaining her motivations.¹⁴² Thus, when Electra and the Chorus praise Orestes in epinician terms, we are reminded of the genre's normative associations; in a play where the moral high-ground of the aristocracy is so consistently challenged, we may also anticipate the way in which these associations are later undermined.

Orestes the athlete

As with *Heracles*, the role that epinician imagery plays takes on additional significance when we recognize that similar language is

¹⁴¹ A further perversion of ritual genres may be operating here, as Electra's invective is the opposite of the expected funerary praise or *thrēnos*.

¹⁴² Lloyd (1986*b*) 9 suggests that the hospitality of the farmer is meant as a foil to the bad behaviour of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra, but in fact Aegisthus is a good host, even if reprehensible in other regards.

used of the play's protagonist elsewhere. The assimilation of Orestes' vengeance to athletic activity is by no means unique to *Electra*: Euripides draws on a well-established tradition of portraying Orestes as an athlete, and one which is found in nearly all the plays dealing with the Orestes myth.¹⁴³

This strand of imagery is developed extensively in the *Oresteia*.¹⁴⁴ The acts which prompt the murder of Agamemnon are described in athletic terms: the decision to sacrifice Iphigeneia is one made by athletic umpires (βραβῆς, *Ag.* 230), whilst the sacking of Troy is a running race (κάμψαι διαύλου θάτερον κῶλον πάλιν, *Ag.* 344). The athletic imagery is then transferred to the killing of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra: the Chorus, praying for Orestes' success, imagine Orestes as a young colt yoked to compete in a chariot race (*Cho.* 794–7) and use the language of racing to suggest the stamina and patience Orestes will need if he is to achieve his victory. This imagery is recalled to horrifying effect at the end of the play, as Orestes applies the same language of chariot-racing to himself to describe his descent into madness (*Cho.* 1022–5). Orestes is now the charioteer rather than the horse, but rather than a race towards a victorious conclusion, Orestes' chariot has left the course and is racing without an end in sight. Far from being victorious, he is defeated (νικώμενον, 1023), and the chariot becomes an image of lack of control rather than power. The metaphors of athletics are then taken over by the Furies, and their significance thus changes: the athletic contest now represents the struggle between Orestes and the Furies, and the sense is one of exertion and danger, not triumph. Thus, when the Furies awake to find Orestes departed from Delphi, they imagine themselves as horses struck by a charioteer in their anxiety to catch their victim (*Eum.* 155–9). In enunciating their powers they then use a metaphor from running, describing themselves as tripping up even the swiftest of runners (σφαλερὰ <καὶ> τανυδρόμοις / κῶλα, *Eum.* 375–6). This imagery of contest continues into the trial scene, where Orestes' admission that he killed his mother is called the first of three wrestling-throws (ἐν μὲν τόδ' ἤδη τῶν τριῶν παλαισμάτων, 589). The ultimate defeat of the Furies is also a defeat in a wrestling match, as

¹⁴³ See Myrick (1993) and Golden (1998) 95–103 for a thorough discussion.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Poliakoff (1980).

they themselves are thrown by the gods (δαναιῶν θεῶν / δυσπάλαμοι, 845–6). The athletic metaphor is reworked when Orestes prays for Athens' future success, now assimilating athletic prowess with the positive and protective qualities demonstrated by the city (πάλαισμ' ἄφυκτον, 776). The athletic imagery thus relates to the play's varying descriptions of *nikē* and its meanings, encouraging the audience to read the problematic victories at Troy and the killings within the family through the more positive filter of athletic success. At the end of the trilogy the concept of *nikē* takes on a more positive meaning, as Athene wishes for victory for the city of Athens (τὸ δὲ κερδαλέον / πέμπειν πόλεως ἐπὶ νίκῃ, 1008–9).

Orestes the athlete is also found in Sophocles' *Electra*, in the Old Man's account of the fictional chariot race in which Orestes is killed (680–763). The choice of a chariot race is striking: in Aeschylus' version of the myth Clytemnestra is simply told of Orestes' death, without a complex story to explain it. The chariot story is also an unusual choice in its own right, compared to the range of natural causes Orestes could have been said to die from. In part this can be explained as interest for its own sake, or as a strategy for depicting Orestes as heroic and noble, rather than simply a victim of bad luck. However, given the detail and drama of the speech, it seems likely that the story has a more substantive purpose. Epinician language is less overt than in the lyric passages discussed above, but there are nevertheless allusions to the genre. In his recent commentary, Finglass suggests that *epinikion* is evoked in order to subvert epinician themes: the speech describes a terrible disaster rather than a glorious victory.¹⁴⁵ The prizes won by Orestes are called *epinikia* (τούτων ἐνεγκῶν πάντα τὰ πινίκια / ὠλβίζετ', 692–3). His previous career at the Games is described in glowing terms, and the Old Man stresses his glory, and the admiration onlookers felt towards him (685–7). Orestes is described by his patronymic and his home-city, as an epinician victor would be (693–4). At the end of the praise of Orestes, we are given a standard epinician *gnōmē*: the warning that not even the greatest man can escape downfall from the gods (696–7). The story of Orestes' crash can thus be understood in the mould of the

¹⁴⁵ Finglass (2007a) 302.

mythological *paradeigmata* common to *epinikion*: having expressed this *gnōmē*, the narrator seeks to justify it by telling a story which illustrates this point.

The idea that the chariot story has a wider resonance gains further support when we observe athletic imagery used elsewhere in the play which serve to link the story to the events of the play. When Orestes first introduces the idea of the false chariot race, he praises his old servant for his loyalty, describing him as an old horse which has not yet lost its spirit (ὥσπερ γὰρ ἵππος εὐγενής, 25). Thus the imaginary horses of the chariot race are implicitly contrasted with the real loyalty of the servant, whose aid to Orestes enables him not to win a race but to carry out his vengeance. The connection between chariots and vengeance is continued in the closing lines of the first stasimon, when the Chorus recall the deceitful chariot race of Pelops and describe it as the initial act which caused the curse on the Atreid house (504–15). When the audience sees a chariot race used to bring about a further piece of trickery (the deceit of Clytemnestra), they may well be reminded of the role chariots have played in the foundation of the curse. Thus, the fictional chariot in the Old Man's story is yet another mechanism for perpetuating the curse on the house of Atreus, and we are led to wonder whether Orestes' vengeance is an act of justice or simply another step in a cycle of deceit and bloodshed. On this reading, we could see Orestes' fictional crash as mirroring his future punishment: the destruction of his chariot occurs after he has passed the final turning post, when he is on the home-stretch to victory, just as his punishment by the Furies will occur at the moment of apparent triumph.¹⁴⁶ We are reminded of this athletic imagery once more when the Chorus describe Electra's piety towards her father as winning a prize, immediately before the recognition scene (1095–7). Again, we are encouraged to perceive the siblings'

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Thomson (1973) 334; Winnington-Ingram (1980) 236, though Finglass (2007a) 302 disagrees, suggesting that the fictional nature of Orestes' death in fact represents his breaking free from his family's history. The question of whether or not Orestes' persecution by the Furies is foreshadowed in the play is much discussed: see Finglass (2007a) 8–10 for an overview. My own view is that Sophocles' audience would certainly be aware of the Furies' normal role in the myth, and that the repeated references to the sibling-avengers as Erinyes (112, 276, 491, 1080, 1388: see Lloyd (2005) 104) acts as an ironic reminder of the future outside the play.

reunion, and thus the possibility of their vengeance, through the filter of athletic imagery.

Euripides draws on this imagery in *Orestes* as well as *Electra*. Here, rather than athleticism standing for Orestes' triumphant vengeance, it is used to express the struggles Orestes faces in the aftermath of the killing: a similar device to what we have seen in *Eumenides*. Again Pelops' chariot race is invoked as the initial sin of the house of Atreus (990–7).¹⁴⁷ The image of Orestes the yoked colt re-emerges, but now Orestes is unyoked from his chariot in his madness (πῶλος ὧς ὑπὸ ζυγοῦ, 45), while he returns from the Argive assembly a defeated rather than victorious charioteer guided by his trace-horse Pylades (ποδὶ κηδοσύνῳ παράσειρος, 1017). The conflicts Orestes faces are repeatedly described as *agōnes* (847, 878, 1222, 1244, 1292, 1342, 1538), and we find a repetition of the *Oresteia*'s imagery of wrestling (83, 1152, 1195–6, 1540). Despite the defeats of the play, however, Orestes' final salvation is also foreshadowed in athletic terms as the divine lawcourt which will acquit him is described through the imagery of athletic umpires (θεοὶ δέ σοι δίκης βραβῆς, 1650).

The athletic language of Euripides' *Electra*, then, draws on an established tradition of Orestes as an athlete. It may be that this tradition was not limited to tragedy.¹⁴⁸ Orestes features in *Pythian* 11, and the choice of this myth for an epinician foil may be at least partly explained by an athletic connection.¹⁴⁹ Similarly, in Seneca's *Agamemnon*, Strophius is on his way back from Olympia when he receives the infant Orestes, and gives him the victory-emblems to symbolize Orestes' own future victory (935–9). It may also be that athletic imagery is appropriate for the telling of a myth which describes the coming-of-age of a young man, just as we find hunting

¹⁴⁷ Willink (1986) on 995 also suggests a connection between Pelops' chariot and the chariot of the sun which Electra describes as overseeing the fulfilment of the curse (1001–2).

¹⁴⁸ Linforth (1963); Egan (1983) 196–8.

¹⁴⁹ Egan (1983) takes this line, though Finglass (2007b) 45–6 disagrees on the grounds that Pindar makes no reference to any such link. However, if we accept a general connection between Orestes and athletics, Orestes' presence in the ode may be enriched by the audience's awareness of this tradition: when dealing with the rich myth-culture of Greece, we cannot limit the myth's resonance to exactly what the author states.

imagery applied to Hippolytus and to Neoptolemus. Whether or not the motif of Orestes the athlete reflects a broader tradition, however, it is certainly a tragic *topos* with which the theatre audience would have been familiar. What is striking about *Electra* is the explicitly epinician flavouring which this imagery is given. The athletic language is clustered around choral passages, and is construed as athletic praise-song, not simply athletic imagery.

This development is a significant one precisely because of the close connection between *epinikion* and praise. Whereas athletic imagery in general terms can be used with a range of associations (for example, struggle and exertion as well as victory), the connotations of *epinikion* are less fluid: an *epinikion* is always a piece of praise-poetry, and its aim is to glorify the athletic deed. *Electra's* most striking feature is the way in which Euripides presents the killings of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra as unusually problematic. Whilst the *Oresteia* does not deny matricide is a difficult and abhorrent act, the trilogy nevertheless encourages us to perceive Orestes as justified, and Clytemnestra as a dangerous and unsympathetic figure. Similarly, in Sophocles' *Electra*, the problematic nature of the matricide is largely left for the audience to infer, rather than being overtly stressed by the characters' own responses. Conversely, *Electra* stresses the difficulty of Orestes' act as much as its justice, and presents the siblings as a little less sympathetic, and Aegisthus and Clytemnestra as a little more sympathetic, than one might expect. The play's emotional power derives from the dramatic turnaround in how the killings are perceived, as Electra and Orestes swing from wild jubilation to horror and self-loathing, thus encouraging the audience to question which of these responses is the appropriate one. The use of epinician language evokes the audience's expectations that the deed described must be a praiseworthy one, only to undermine this assumption. Instead, the ending of the play suggests a shift back to the less jubilant associations of athletic imagery, with its emphasis on hard work and suffering. The audience's pre-existing familiarity with the figure of Orestes the athlete, then, allows the epinician language to work effectively, for the imagery awakens the audience's expectations of the meanings athleticism can hold, and allows them to see how these are negotiated through the figure of Orestes.

Conclusion

The examination of *Heracles* and *Electra* highlights the degree to which lyric genres can be used as shorthand to evoke a set of values and assumptions bound up in the poetry. We have already seen this technique used with the *paian*, where references to the genre suggest the attitude to the gods that the genre embodies. Using epinician imagery, therefore, becomes a subtle way to explore the ethical implications of the poetry, and how it relates to what we see on-stage. As with the *paian*, tension is created by the gap between the norms of the genre and the action of the play. *Epinikion* praises a particular way of life, prioritizing traditional aristocratic values such as physical prowess, good governance, nobility, and wealth. The poetry not only praises successful victors, but also goes on to remind them of their place in a moral code: for example, their responsibilities to the wider community and to the gods. When tragedy evokes *epinikion* it taps into these associations and explores their operation within the tragic universe. Thus, Medea's self-presentation as an athletic figure suggests the failure of traditional views about heroism, as her adherence to this moral code leads to the play's disastrous action. Conversely, when the Chorus of *Andromache* praise Peleus as an epinician victor, we see a widening of the sphere of epinician values, to incorporate broader concepts of heroism. The values of *epinikion* are thus evoked as a moral template, but one which usually fails in tragedy, whether because the values are themselves intrinsically flawed or because they cannot operate successfully within the malfunctioning world of tragedy.

In the two plays examined in detail, the value-system of *epinikion* is used by both plays to achieve different ends. The initial praise directed at Heracles as an individual is used to achieve an ironic effect, contrasting the cultic resonances of praising Heracles with the hero as he is portrayed in the play. However, the language of praise is redeployed at the end of the play, where Heracles' incorporation into Athens is depicted as a focusing of *epinikion* values towards the community rather than the individual. When directed solely at Heracles, the language of praise highlighted the gap between ideal and reality, suggesting how difficult it is for a human individual to

live up to this kind of exaltation. The ending of the play hints at a new way to integrate the value-system of praise-poetry, by an increased focus on the role of the community as the recipient of praise in its own right, rather than simply participating in the reflected glory of the great individual.

Conversely, in *Electra*, the characters use epinician imagery to describe the killings, and so they imply that the killings merit the same response and demonstrate the same values as an athletic victory. Here, the discrepancy between the positive language of praise and the way the killings are actually presented encourages us to rethink our attitude towards Orestes and Electra. Aristocratic birth and the nature of *aretē* is an important theme in the play. Hence, the use of epinician language can be seen as yet another exploration of traditional aristocratic values, and a re-evaluation of the way that Orestes and Electra conduct themselves.

To some extent, the normative status of the lyric genre and the tension between this and the tragic world is similar to what we have already observed with *paian*. In both cases, the lyric genre presents a positive set of values and beliefs, which are questioned and undermined in tragedy. However, upon closer analysis, the status of *epinikion* is different, and this is reflected in the way it is handled. The conventions of the *paian* may be at odds with the conventions of tragedy, but they nevertheless reflect a set of norms accepted by the community within their own religious context. The situation with *epinikion* is somewhat different because of its inherent politicization and the complex relationship that it has to the Athenian *polis*. In short, the norms of the genre themselves are open to question, and this is reflected by the way they are deployed in the plays. In both these plays, there is something actively problematic rather than simply naive in the way that the characters attempt to use *epinikion* as a model for their own lives. Thus, both plays challenge their audience to consider what ethical status they are content to attribute to *epinikion*.

Partheneia

Partheneia pose considerably more of a challenge than *paianes* or *epinikia*. The first problem we face is the tiny quantity of surviving poetry, which makes it difficult to come to general conclusions about the genre. In addition, we lack ancient testimony about parthenaic poetry and its performance occasions, which also limits the inferences we can draw. Nevertheless, in recent years scholarship has reached a better understanding of the role *partheneia* might have played as a transitional genre and the poetry's relationship to the *rites de passage* of young women. If an important function of *partheneia* was to mark female development and the role that *parthenoi* could play within their community, we might expect rich intertexts with tragedy, which is frequently concerned with social and familial roles and their perversion. While identifying parthenaic allusions in tragic texts is complicated, in this chapter I shall seek to demonstrate that, in cases where we can do so, the allusions serve to illuminate the religious and civic issues which the plays explore.

THE GENRE

As we turn to *partheneia*, before examining definitional issues we must face an existential one: did *partheneia* constitute something we might call a genre in any meaningful sense? Ancient sources speak freely of *partheneia* as a distinctive genre, and Proclus identifies it as belonging to his 'mixed' category of songs performed for both gods

and men.¹ We even have some evidence from the classical period, for in Aristophanes' *Birds*, *partheneia* are named as a possible poetic genre in the Poet's repertoire along with μέλη κύκλια (which often means *dithyrambos*) and 'Simonidean song' (918–19). However, as we have seen, ancient naming is not always reliable in determining genre-boundaries, and it may be that Aristophanes is using the term simply as a catch-all for female song. Thus while many scholars continue to refer to *partheneia* as a category of poetry, Claude Calame in his influential study of female choruses rejects the term as a generic one, and instead divides all choruses performed by young women into categories determined by other functions, including separate genres such as *hymnos* and *dithyrambos*.² The other genres I discuss in this book are identifiable primarily by the roles they play, and I have argued that function is the first place to begin in trying to define Greek genres. A performance context and purpose provide a core identity which allows us to distinguish a genre as independent, regardless of other definitional problems. So to defend the status of *partheneia* as a true genre we must look further at what purpose such performances are felt to achieve and at what other identifying features unite the poems.

The first rule we can set down is that, by definition, the song must be performed by a chorus of *parthenoi*.³ However, choruses of young women performed at a range of occasions and sang songs which fell into various different categories; *partheneia* as they are spoken of by later sources seem to be only a subset of these performances. When sources mention the Deliades performing in honour of Apollo, for example, the song they sing is a *paian*: the fact that the singers are *parthenoi* is not sufficient to put it into a separate category as a *partheneion*.⁴ Similarly, tragic choruses of

¹ Proclus, *Chrest. ap. Phot. Bibl.* 239.320a3: εἰς θεοὺς δὲ καὶ ἀνθρώπους παρθένια. For *partheneia* named as a genre by later writers, see also Dion. Hal. *de Demosthenis Dictione* 39.43; Aristox. fr. 82.9 (quoted in [Plut.] *de Musica* 1136 F 5); *Suda* π 661 = iv. 58. 4 Adler.

² See Calame (1977) 1: 18–20 on the validity of *partheneia* as a term, and 145–67 on different functions of women's choruses.

³ Indeed the *Suda* simply gives this as the definition: τὰ εἰς παρθένους ἀδόμενα μέλη (π 661 = iv. 58. 4 Adler).

⁴ *HHAp.* 157; *Eur. Her.* 687–90. See pp. 64–5 above.

young females sing a range of songs alluding to real-life genres of all kinds. So to say that there is any such thing as a parthenaic motif in tragedy, we need a definition with more content than simply 'sung by *parthenoi*', which would be too general to be productive. Given the paucity of surviving *partheneia* and the lack of useful ancient discussion of the genre, this is a challenging task, and any conclusions we draw from the texts must remain tentative ones. However, when we analyse the few surviving fragments which we do have, there are identifiable traits and motifs which seem distinctive and unlike what we see in other lyric genres. We can only say that these motifs are characteristic rather than essential. Nevertheless, they can be helpful in allowing us to spot parthenaic motifs in other texts.

Parthenoi and femininity

Even if performance by *parthenoi* is not a sufficient condition to make something a *partheneion*, we might nevertheless expect that the age and gender of the performers is of particular relevance to the genre. When we examine the surviving fragments of *partheneia*, we indeed find a particular focus on these aspects of the performers' identity. Unlike other lyric choruses, parthenaic choruses name their members and their leaders. We are given the names of ten girls in Alcman fr. 1 *PMGF*, while one (Astymeloisa) is named in the much more fragmentary fr. 3. In Pindar's second *partheneion* (fr. 94b S–M) a girl called Damaina is named as a participant in the procession (66–70), as well as a female instructor named Andaisistrota (71). The *Oxyrhynchus Life of Pindar* also tells us that two girls named Protomache and Eumetis (said to be Pindar's own daughters) were named in another of his *partheneia*.⁵ Whether these names are real or 'stage-names' is not the point: the names are non-mythological and thus presumed to be real for the purposes of the performance. The identification of the performers is thus a central concern of the

⁵ *Vit. Pind. Oxy.* 2438.24. The girls are also mentioned in *Vit. Pind. Ambr.* (1.3.3 Drachmann).

poetry, as is the stress laid on their role in the song or the related ritual.⁶

As well as naming and listing participants, *partheneia* place particular emphasis on their gender and status as *parthenoi*.⁷ For example, the chorus in Alcman fr. 1 *PMGF* repeatedly draw attention to their gender, describing themselves as *παρσένος* (86) and as *νεάνιδες* (90). The two girls singled out for praise, Hagesichora and Agido, are repeatedly described through conventional imagery of female beauty: they are compared to horses (50–1, 59–60), and to the shining brightness of precious metals (54–5) and light (40–1).⁸ Hagesichora is said to ‘bloom’ (*ἐπανθεί*, 53), drawing on the conventional *topos* whereby female beauty is assimilated with natural growth. Eight other girls are also named and singled out for feminine features, as the chorus contrast accessories such as headbands and bracelets (64–9) with the surpassing beauty of Hagesichora (77). In Alcman fr. 3 *PMGF* we find a similar focus on femininity as the chorus describe tossing their blonde hair (9) and call their feet *ἀπ]αλοί* (‘tender’), a word associated with female desirability.⁹ The sexual overtones continue as they go on to praise Astymeloisa, who is again compared to shining objects (a star at 66, gold at 68), and to a young shoot (*χρύσιον ἔρνος*, 68), again presenting her sexual desirability in the language of natural fertility.¹⁰ Once more we see

⁶ I agree with Stehle (1997) 87–8 in rejecting Calame’s suggestion that the choral group was private and closed. There is no indication that young women’s ritual or initiation groups performed in private, and it seems to go against what we know of the public and festal nature of the chorus in Greek life. The Poet at Aristoph. *Birds* 917–19 suggests *partheneia* as one of the song types appropriate for building the cultural life of a new community. Whether or not this refers to *partheneia* in the strict sense, or just to any song sung by *parthenoi*, it suggests that choruses of *parthenoi* could be associated with community poetry to an Athenian audience.

⁷ For the sexualized imagery in Alcman fr. 1 *PMGF* see also Clark (1996).

⁸ Cf. Sapph. fr. 16.17 V for the ‘bright sparkle’ (*ἀμάρυγμα λάμπρον*) of Anactoria, and fr. 34, 96.8–9 V where the girl shines like the moon.

⁹ For hair as an erotic symbol, cf. Archil. fr. 31 W; Sapph. fr. 98, 103.12 V. Semon. fr. 7.57 W describes excessive attention to hair as a mark of the luxurious ‘mare’ woman. For *ἀπαλός* used with erotic overtones cf. Sapph. fr. 94.22, 96.13, 122, 140 V; Semon. fr. 7.57 W. Likewise, women’s feet (and particularly ankles) are often described as a mark of youthful beauty: cf. *HHDem.* 2, 77; Sapph. fr. 44.15 V (conversely for fat ankles as a mark of female ugliness Archil. fr. 206 W).

¹⁰ Cf. Hom. *Od.* 6.162–9: see p. 178 below for further analysis of this imagery.

attention paid to feminine trappings in the perfume she wears on her hair (71–2), while her description as *π]αρσενικᾶν* (72) again reminds us of her unmarried status. In Pindar's *partheneion* we find a similar focus on feminine activities: the chorus introduce themselves with an account of putting on their robes (6), while their description of their hands as 'soft' (*χερσὶν τ' ἐν μαλακαῖσιν*, 7) also evokes typically female attributes.¹¹ In this poem too we find regular reminders of the chorus's identity as *parthenoi*, as they describe their heads as 'maidenly' (*παρθένιον κάρα*, 12) before going on to express the duties and limitations of their status (*ἐμὲ δὲ πρέπει / παρθενήϊα μὲν φρονεῖν / γλώσσα τε λέγεσθαι*, 'it is right for me to think maidenly thoughts and to speak them with my tongue', 33–5).¹²

Parthenaic song, then, pays a great deal of attention to the identity and status of the female chorus which performed it.¹³ The audience is regularly reminded that the chorus consists of *parthenoi*, engaged in a particular activity, and the singers are characterized through typical feminine attributes. In terms of understanding the poetry's function, this seems significant. Who the performers are and what they are doing at the time of performance is embedded in the poetry itself in a way which we do not find in other lyric genres.¹⁴

Transition and sexuality

The focus on *parthenoi* and their status is therefore a key aspect of *partheneia*. While all three surviving fragments are set at a specific religious occasion, the identity of the singers is as central to the song's purpose as the ritual itself. Yet for human women, being a *parthenos* is not a perpetual state, but rather one which automatically looks towards a change. By drawing attention to the fact that the singers are *parthenoi*, the poems also hint at the future end-point of this status, for being a *parthenos* is a stage in life which ends in marriage and a new role within the community. This ties in with recent scholarship

¹¹ e.g. Sapph. fr. 94.21–3 V; Soph. *Ant.* 783.

¹² Cf. Lehnus (1984) 81.

¹³ Indeed Dionysius comments on the difference in poetic voice between Pindar's *partheneia* and his usual 'austere' style (*Demosthenes* 39); see Klinck (2001).

¹⁴ Cf. Hamilton (1989) 470; Calame (1995).

on Alcman fr. 1 *PMGF* which interprets the poem in the light of transitional ritual. Yet to understand the importance of transition to parthenaic lyric, it is not necessary to locate the transition in the ritual itself. Rather, *partheneia*, by focusing on the identity of the performers, inherently suggest a future change to their status. The *parthenos* is attractive precisely because she is not yet a mature and married woman, but it is nevertheless her capacity to become a *gunē* which makes her desirable.

Furthermore, many modern scholars have read Alcman fr. 1 *PMGF* as embedded in a ritual whose purpose is not only to honour the goddess (60, 87), but to help young girls to make the transition to becoming mature women in a safe and appropriate way.¹⁵ As we have seen, the poem repeatedly draws attention to the girls' sexual desirability, and above all to the beauty of Hagesichora and Agido.¹⁶ Calame therefore believes these two girls to be slightly older and on the brink of marriage; whether or not this is the case, they are certainly described with imagery which is erotic, and the audience is thus invited to consider them as sexual beings. The chorus is participating in some ritual task (Ὀρθρία φᾶρος φεροίσεις, 61) which involves an element of risk and danger: they describe themselves as under attack (μάχονται, 63) and in need of protection which their finery alone cannot provide (οὔτε γάρ τι πορφύρας / τόσσοις κόρος ὥστ' ἀμύναι, 64–5). This protection is provided by Hagesichora (reading *τηρεῖ* in 77), whose power is able to bring about peace for the girls (ἐξ Ἀγησιχόρ[ας] δὲ νεάνιδες / ἰρ]ήνας ἐρατ[ᾶ]ς ἐπέβαν, 90–1).¹⁷ Without Hagesichora the chorus is powerless (μάταν, 86) and their song is likened to the screeching of an owl: unpleasant and

¹⁵ This is now generally agreed: see Calame (1977); Lonsdale (1993) 193–205; Stehle (1997) chs. 1 and 2; Ingalls (2000); Cyrino (2004). Griffiths (1972) and Gentili (1988) 75–6 believe the poem to have been part of a wedding ceremony rather than belonging to an earlier stage in the development of *parthenoi*, but even this reading draws on similar themes of female transition to maturity.

¹⁶ There has been much debate as to which of the two is more desirable. I agree with West (1965) 197 that the question is not meaningful: the purpose of the praise is to set *both* girls apart from the rest of the girls, and Alcman deliberately avoids comparing the two of them.

¹⁷ *τηρεῖ* fits better with the repeated imagery of danger and protection: the stanza begins with the chorus's inability to defend themselves through finery, followed by the inadequacy of the other girls named, culminating in Hagesichora's role in the final

ill-omened (85–7). With the harmony and order provided by Hagesichora, however, the chorus becomes a well-disciplined unit (92–5), and the negative image of the owl is replaced by the melodious music of the swan (100–1).

Hagesichora and the chorus face two rival forces: the Peleïades (60–3) and the Sirens (96–9). The role played by the Peleïades has been a subject of intense dispute, with scholars interpreting the word to mean Hagesichora and Agido, the star-cluster, or even as a rival chorus.¹⁸ The main difficulty with all these readings is how to reconcile them with the chorus's statement that the Peleïades are 'fighting' them (*μάχονται*, 63). The word is inappropriate when applied to Hagesichora and Agido, who help and protect the chorus elsewhere in the poem. Scholars who want to take the Peleïades as the chorus leaders are forced to maintain that *μάχονται* means something like 'outstrip in beauty', but this would be a difficult use of the word, and relies on assuming that the word is meant humorously rather than allowing it any meaningful content.¹⁹ Even the rival chorus theory (which has little appeal other than to get around this problem) fails to work, for *μάχονται* would be an odd word to use of a choral competition.²⁰ The star-cluster seems the most plausible of these suggestions, given the mention of Sirius in the same sentence

lines, which implicitly resolves the powerlessness posed by the preceding lines. It is true, however, that *τείρει* fits with the erotic language used of Hagesichora earlier in the song (though elsewhere it is not made clear that the chorus themselves are in love with Hagesichora, rather than praising her for the benefit of the onlookers). Either reading still stresses Hagesichora's superiority and power over the other girls, while her supervisory and protective role is made clear elsewhere.

¹⁸ Hagesichora and Agido (originally suggested by the scholiast): Puelma (1977); Segal (1983); Robbins (1994); Peponi (2004) 303–6; stars: Burnett (1964); West (1965) 197; (1970) 205; Stehle (1997) 79–85; Hutchinson (2001) 91–3; rival chorus: Page (1951) 55–7; Bowra (1961) 56–8; Rosenmeyer (1966); Dunkel (1979).

¹⁹ A different way around this problem is suggested by Halporn (1972), who argues that *μάχονται* refers to the chorus's attempt to make Hagesichora and Agido love them, when the two girls have eyes only for each other. This, however, seems an equally unsatisfactory use of *μάχονται*, while Hagesichora and Agido's love for each other is suggested nowhere in the text.

²⁰ Dunkel (1979) suggests various Homeric parallels, but I find them unconvincing: for example, when Agamemnon refers to his verbal contest with Achilles as a battle (*μαχεσσάμεθ*, *Il.* 2.377), the context is not formalized competition but a vicious argument which nearly led to physical fighting, and so is hardly a parallel to the chorus's situation.

(62). However, the problem of μάχονται still remains, for the word implies a sense of genuine hostility and danger, and it is hard to explain how it could apply to the stars and why they should be 'fighting against' the chorus.²¹

When we understand the danger in more symbolic terms, however, the Peleïades' hostility becomes more intelligible, as does the chorus's mention of the Sirens towards the end of the poem. Both of these groups can be understood as alternative and undesirable forms of femininity. Rather than finding complicated explanations as to who the Peleïades represent, we do better to turn back to the myth itself.²² The Peleïades were girls who were turned into doves in order to avoid the sexual advances of Orion; later set in the sky as stars, they are perpetually fleeing their male aggressor.²³ Thus they are examples of girls who attempt to remain perpetual virgins, yet it is only by their transformation into animals that this can be achieved.²⁴ Conversely, the Sirens are mentioned as rival singers whom the chorus need to propitiate and against whom they cannot compete (ἀ δὲ τᾶν Σηρην[ί]δων /

²¹ Burnett (1964) sees the conflict as competition, and envisages the chorus in a race with the Peleïades; this, however, creates the same problem as the rival chorus theory: how can a word as strong as μάχονται be used to mean 'pursue'? Stehle (1997) 79–85 suggests that the Peleïades herald the start of the summer and so pose a threat to the ploughing which she believes the festival marks; Hutchinson (2001) 91–3 suggests that the Peleïades are imagined to be preventing the rise of the sun and so the completion of the ritual. However, neither suggestion seems to me to adequately explain the sense of conflict and danger inherent in μάχονται. Hutchinson rightly notes the role of female beauty in repelling the attack, but this makes a straightforwardly astronomical interpretation of the Peleïades difficult: it is hard to see why female beauty would be relevant to a battle between the stars and the sun.

²² A mythological resonance is noted by Ingalls (2000) 9. This interpretation does not preclude the idea that the Peleïades also refers to the star-cluster. Imagery need not be monolithic, and the Peleïades themselves were girls, doves, and stars: indeed, it might have been the presence of the stars in the sky that made them an appropriate choice of mythological foil: cf. Bowra (1961) 56; Clark (1996) 160. Clay (1991) 61 suggests that the Peleïades offer a mythological paradigm for the chorus's dance, citing a scholion on Theocritus 13 which claims that the Peleïades established choral dancing as a transition ritual. This is an interesting suggestion, though it seems to me to leave the hostility implicit in μάχονται unexplained.

²³ Cf. Hes. *WD* 619–20; Pind. *Nem.* 2.11–12, *Dith.* fr. 72, 74; Schol. Aratus, *Phaen.* 261–3. For Orion as an attempted seducer cf. also Hor. *Odes* 3.4.70–2.

²⁴ The image of the virgin whose attempt to avoid sex leads to her dehumanization is a common one: see pp. 201 and 205 below.

ἄοιδοτέρᾳ μ[ὲν οὐχί, 96–7).²⁵ Alcman elsewhere evokes the Siren as a singer, conflating her with the Muse (ἅ Μῶσα κέκλαγ' ἅ λίγηα Σηρήν, fr. 30 *PMGF*). Yet the Sirens' song also represents a seductive yet dangerous form of femininity: in the *Odyssey* they fit into a pattern of beguiling female characters who seek to delay Odysseus' return, and their powers are described in terms of their destructive effects on marriage and the family unit as well as on the individual men they kill (12.41–4). The Homeric Sirens are, moreover, located in a flowery meadow (λειμῶν ἀνθεμόεις, 12.159), further highlighting their erotic power: not only does the meadow indicate seduction scenes in Greek poetry in general, but within the poem it recalls the flowery meadows of Calypso's island (λειμῶνες μαλακοὶ Ἴου ἥδ' ἐσελίνου, 5.72).²⁶ The Sirens, like the Peleiades, represent a negative paradigm for mortal *parthenoi*, for they are also perpetual virgins, who use their powers to entrap and kill men.

The chorus of girls are thus faced with two symbolic forces of resistance, each of which represents the dangers of female sexual transition both to the girls and to the wider community.²⁷ Hagesichora and Agido, conversely, demonstrate the attractive potential of female sexuality if correctly deployed, and so are able to protect the other girls and help them fend off the threat they face. By emphasizing the desirability of the girls they admire, the chorus use them as a foil for the hopes of the other members of the age group.²⁸ Hagesichora's uniqueness does not preclude the other girls from becoming mature; rather, she offers the possibility that the rest of the group can join her. In Alcman's second *partheneion* (fr. 3 *PMGF*) we see Astymeloisa playing a similar

²⁵ Bowie (forthcoming) suggests that the Sirens are the Peleiades, referred to euphemistically. This is an attractive suggestion, but seems insufficiently supported: the Sirens may be winged, but we have no evidence for them being called 'doves', and the fact that the chorus is happy to name them at the end of the poem makes it unlikely that they need to be euphemistic.

²⁶ Gresseth (1970) 208–9 notes this parallelism, but suggests the meadow indicates death or supernatural activity (citing the meadow in the underworld at 11.539 as further evidence). However, the meadow as an erotic motif is well known in Greek poetry: cf. Hom. *Il.* 14.294–351; Sapph. fr. 2 V; Archil. fr. 196a W. See Vernant (1983) 135–42; Segal (1981) 27–9, and pp. 268–71.

²⁷ For the dangers of female sexuality and the need to control it, see Sourvinou-Inwood (1987); Cole (1984).

²⁸ Cf. Cyrino (2004) 30–1.

role, as she acts as the focus of the chorus's admiration and desire, yet remains separate and unattainable to them.²⁹

The themes of managing sexuality might also have been evident in the mythological section of the poem, which certainly contains a warning to avoid unsuitable marriage partners:

[μή τις ἀνθ]ρώπων ἐς ὠρανὸν ποτήσθω
μηδὲ πη]ρήτω γαμῆν τὰν Ἀφροδίταν
Ε]άν[α]σσαν ἢ τιν'
] ἢ παῖδα Πόρκω (16–19)

Let no man fly up to the heavens, or try to marry Aphrodite... the queen... or a daughter of Porcus.

The overt moral here is a warning about knowing one's place and not transgressing the boundary between mortals and gods: a common *topos* of lyric poetry. Nonetheless, it is interesting that the example the chorus give to illustrate their point is a story about marriage. If we are happy to follow various scholars in reconstructing the damaged section as telling the myth of the battle between the Dioscuri and the Hippocoontidae over the wooing of the Leucippides, this moral becomes integral to the poem's first half as the audience is warned about appropriate and inappropriate modes of sexual behaviour.³⁰ In any case, the warning about marriage partners implicitly contrasts the forbidden divine marriage with the mortal girls on offer: a point reinforced at the end of the surviving section of the poem where the girls contrast their chorus to the immortality of the Sirens (σινὰ γάρ, 'for they are goddesses', 98).

Thus, despite the allusive and confusing nature of Alcman's *partheneion* we find a consistent theme of female sexuality and the dangers surrounding female sexual transitions. The purpose of the girls' song, and the ritual, seems to be to ward off the threat posed by the Peleïades under the protection of Hagesichora and Agido, girls

²⁹ Cf. Peponi (2007) 353–4.

³⁰ See Page (1951) 31–3; Garvie (1965); Stehle (1997) 30–5. Robbins (1994) also notes the parallelism between the chorus and the Hippocoontidae, but suggests (in my opinion unconvincingly) that this indicates the relationship between the chorus and Hagesichora and Agido is parallel to that between the Hippocoontidae and the Dioscuri.

whose sexual desirability makes them able to assist the other members of the chorus. We find similar themes emerging in Pindar's *partheneion*, as again the Siren is set up as an alternative form of singer:

σειρήνα δὲ κόμπων
 ἀνλίσκων ὑπὸ λωτίνων
 μιμήσομ' αἰοιδαῖς
 κείνον, ὃς Ζεφύρου τε σιγάξει πνοὰς
 αἰψήρας, ὅποταν τε χειμῶνος σθένει
 φρίσσων Βορέας ἐπι-
 σπέρχῃσ' ὠκύαλον ἥ τε πόντου ἥ
 ῥ]ιπὰν ἥ ἐτάραξε καὶ ἥ (13–20)

I will imitate in my songs, sung to the lotus pipes, that sound of the Siren which silences the quick breezes of the west wind, and stirs up the blast whenever bristling Boreas rages swiftly over the sea in his wintry strength.

The Siren is again presented as a rival singer, and one against whose power the chorus cannot compete. Yet the supernatural power of the Siren's song is implicitly contrasted with the 'maidenly' thoughts which the chorus go on to explain they will sing (31–5). Again we see the Siren used as an analogue to the chorus's own activity, but one described in a way which emphasizes the dangerous power of her song.³¹ By contrast, the chorus's song is aimed at benefiting the community and those individuals to whom praise is owed (36–45). These themes of sexuality and fertility are also evident in Proclus' description of the *daphnēphorikon* festival for which it was commissioned.³² The festival focused around taking the *κωπώ*, a wooden icon decorated with various paraphernalia and carried by a boy with two living parents (*ἀμφιθαλής*), to two shrines of Apollo. The *ἀμφιθαλής* symbolized prosperity and good fortune, yet he also represented fertility and the hope of healthy children. This association is demonstrated by the role that an *ἀμφιθαλής* played in wedding ritual (for example, in Athens), where he distributed bread (symbolizing the cultivation inherent in the marriage-rite) and wore a crown

³¹ See Lehnus (1984) 80.

³² Proclus, *Chrest. ap. Phot. Bibl.* 239.321b12–31.

of acorns and thorns (symbolizing the 'wild' life of the *parthenos* which the bride was leaving behind).³³ Both shrines involved in the ritual are connected with fertility: the temple of Apollo Ismenius contained the couch of Melia, which commemorated a sacred marriage, and the cult of Apollo Galaxios is presumably connected with the production of milk from the herd. Finally, the appearance of the *κωπώ* itself has also been thought to represent a female figure.³⁴

We have seen, then, that at the heart of *partheneia* are issues involving femininity, sexuality, and female development. This does not mean that *partheneia* did not also deal with other themes, or present more general morals and advice.³⁵ Alcman's girls remind their audience of the dangers of transgression (16–20), the potential for divine retribution (ἔστι τις σιῶν τίσις, 36), and the instability of mortal fortune (ὁ δ' ὀλβιος, ὅστις εὐφρων / ἀμέραν [δι]απλέκει / ἄκλαυτος, 37–9). Pindar's girls have an important role to play in honouring the *daphnēphoros* and his family (36–45), and they also tell a story reminding their listeners of the importance of justice and the dangers of strife (61–5). However, as we have already seen, this type of moralizing is a feature of the Greek chorus in all its manifestations; while *partheneia* are not precluded from setting out these shared values, it is not a feature which helps us to see what is distinctive about the genre.³⁶ Moreover, despite the continuities outlined, it would be misleading to claim that there were not also differences between our surviving *partheneia*. For example, the girls'

³³ For the ἀμφιθαλής cf. Callim. *Aet.* fr. 751–3; Eustath. *Od.* 1726.18; Zenob. 3.98: see Golden (1990) 30; Oakley and Sinos (1993) 20.

³⁴ Stehle (1997) 93–4; see Schachter (1981) 83–4 for the *κωπώ*, 48–9 for the cult of Galaxios, 78 and 85 for the cult of Ismenius. For the connection of the Ismenion with Melia see Pind. *Pyth.* 11.4–6, fr. 29.1, fr. 52g.3–4, fr. 52k.40–6. For the feminine nature of the *κωπώ* see Schonberger (1942) 88.

³⁵ Cf. D'Alessio (1994) 118–20. Too (1997) also stresses the wider sociological and political role of parthenaic song.

³⁶ Stehle (1997) 39–41 suggests (with reference to the Rhodian swallow-song) that *parthenoi* can give moral warnings precisely because of their powerlessness in real life: 'Children and *parthenoi*, who are powerless, are good bearers of disguised warnings because they cannot act on them in their own persons.' However, this seems to me to overlook the moralizing nature of the Greek chorus in general: parthenaic choruses moralize no more than epinician or paeanic ones, for example, which consisted of male citizens.

relationships and sexuality are foregrounded more by Alcman than by Pindar; given the difference in time and place of the poems' performance, this may reflect the differences in social *mores* or in the position of women between the two communities for which they were composed. Equally, we should generalize with care, for drawing conclusions on such fragmentary evidence is bound to lead us to oversimplify. If further *partheneia* are discovered in the future, it might become apparent that analysing the genre solely in terms of Alcman and Pindar gives us a partial view of a complex picture.

Despite the confusion around the term, then, we can identify a functional role for a type of performance which we can call *partheneia* in a narrower and more useful sense. The criterion for what constitutes a *partheneion* in this stricter sense is best understood as a thematic one: it should have some connection with the fact that it is performed by *parthenoi*, and in particular with their transition from being girls to mature women. At least part of the function of *partheneia* is connected with its performers and their status as *parthenoi*. A *partheneion* in this sense is any song which, as part of its function, engages with this subject-matter, and which also plays a part in the life-cycle of the *parthenoi* in their community. In terms of detail, the singling out of particular special girls, and the level of attention paid to the performers and their activities, are distinctively parthenaic features.

This focus on the singers' own identity highlights what makes *partheneia* unusual compared to other lyric genres: what sets it apart has to do with the status of the performers rather than the performance occasion. By definition the chorus must consist of *parthenoi*, but the relevance of the performers goes deeper than this. The song is automatically self-referential: who the singers are and what the performance means for them is central to an understanding of the text. In a *paian* or *hymenaios*, the chorus may be required to be of a particular sex, age, or status, but the performance is essentially a response to an outside event. For *partheneia*, the performers, and the ritual they are experiencing, *is* (at least partly) the event for which the community is gathered, even if there is a broader religious context which carries other types of importance.

ATHENIAN *PARTHENEIA*

In order to analyse parthenaic motifs in tragedy, we must also consider what status female choral performance held in Athens.³⁷ Compared to other Greek *poleis*, female choruses seem to have played remarkably little part in public life. We know of female dancing at the *pannychides* which formed part of many state festivals, but it is unclear what relation this kind of dancing would have had to a formal trained chorus. Female choruses certainly did not compete in state festivals, and we find no references to the funding of a women's chorus by the state or by private individuals.

The only institution we know of which could have provided a structure to train *parthenoi* in dancing was the *arkteia*, a ritual whereby young girls spent time serving at the shrine of Artemis at Brauron (discussed in more detail in pp. 198–201). It is possible that this provided a medium for formal choral performance: we know that the *arktoi* took part in various activities including dance, and it is reasonable to suppose that their service to the goddess would have culminated in some kind of public performance.³⁸ Even so, this choral training and performance would only have been accessible to a minority of girls, and as a one-off event in their lives. It may have been that women were trained in ways and on occasions which are not preserved by our male-orientated sources, but the public and festal *partheneia* choruses of Sparta or Thebes have no Athenian equivalent: if parthenaic choruses occurred in Athens outside the four-yearly *arkteia*, they did so quietly, and without the civic support and recognition that their male equivalents received.

However, it also seems unambiguous that Athenian audiences were not only used to parthenaic performance as a concept, but were also familiar with the details of the poetic tradition of *partheneia*. This is brought out strongly by the ending of the *Lysistrata*, which presupposes a surprising level of familiarity with the finer points of Spartan parthenaic cult:

³⁷ For a thorough account of this issue see Parker (2005) 182–3.

³⁸ Cf. Parker (2005) 230–1 on performance at the *arkteia*, 183 and 243 on the *arkteia* as a medium for choral training.

εἶα μάλ' ἔμβη,
 ὦ εἶα κοῦφα πᾶλον,
 ὥς Σπάρταν ὑμνίωμες,
 τῇ σιῶν χοροὶ μέλονται
 καὶ ποδῶν κτύπος,
 <ὄχ'> ἄτε πῶλοι ταὶ κόραι
 παρ τὸν Εὐρώταν
 ἀμπαδίωντι, πυκνὰ ποδοῖν
 ἀγκονίωαί,
 ταὶ δὲ κόμαι σείονται
 ἄπερ Βακχᾶν θυρσαδδωᾶν καὶ παιδδωᾶν.
 ἀγῆται δ' ἅ Αἰήδας παῖς
 ἀγνὰ χοραγὸς εὐπρεπής.
 ἀλλ' ἄγε, κόμαν παραμπύκιδδε χερὶ ποδοῖν τε πάδη
 ᾗ τις ἔλαφος, κρότον δ' ἅμᾳ ποίη χορωφελήταν,
 καὶ τὰν κρατίστην παμμάχον, τὰν Χαλκίοικον ὕμνη. (1303–20)

Step out then! Dance it lightly, in order to celebrate Sparta, which delights in choruses in honour of the gods and in the pounding of feet. The girls leap like fillies by the Eurotas, raising clouds of dust with their feet, and their hair flows like the hair of bacchantes who play waving their thyrsuses. Leda's daughter leads them, the sacred and noble chorus-leader. Come now, bind up your hair with your hand, and let your feet leap like a deer, and make a noise to help the dance, and sing in praise of the most powerful one, who vanquishes all in battle, she of the Bronze House.

The level of detail is more than just backdrop, and shows knowledge of Spartan ritual activity. The description of the girls as πῶλοι ties in with their cultic presentation in Laconia (for example the cult of the Leucippides, also evoked by the horse-imagery in Alcman fr. 1).³⁹ Helen's presence also fits in with ritual practice: one of her cult sites in Sparta was indeed located on the banks of the Eurotas, where the girls are imagined performing. Helen is called the χοραγός, suggesting a Hagesichora-like figure with special status in the ritual (here envisaged as the deity in charge of supervising the ritual). As in *partheneia*, attention is paid to the dancers themselves as well as to the details of the dance: the shaking of the head, the binding up of the hair. The girls are described in sexualized terms, for they are called

³⁹ Cf. Bowra (1961) 53–4; Garvie (1965).

‘fillies’ (πῶλοι) and ‘deer’ (ἐλαφος), both images which are regularly used to describe the sexual inexperience and desirability of young women.⁴⁰ Aristophanes, then, expects enough of his audience to respond to these details to feel it worth putting them in. The same argument can be made for parthenaic references in tragedy: even if Athenians do not have access to a local tradition of parthenaic performance, they are nevertheless familiar enough with it to notice and respond to a detailed level of allusion.⁴¹

We could say, then, that the presentation of parthenaic choruses in tragedy combines a number of elements: the choral tradition of Attic tragedy and the Athenian audience’s awareness of the parthenaic tradition in other *poleis*, along with the socializing role that this practice played in those communities. When tragic choruses evoke *partheneia*, they do so in a way which presupposes that parthenaic performance is of ritual and civic significance. In fact, while the transition of young girls was certainly of importance in Athens, and was expressed via means of ritual (for example, the *arkteia* and *arrhēphoria*), their public expression via the medium of song and dance was not a local feature. But any possible strangeness is lessened for the Athenian audience because of the strength of the choral tradition in other forms, combined with the mimetic nature of tragedy, which allows it to incorporate and localize alien features.

⁴⁰ Archil. fr. 196a.47 W; Anacr. fr. 408, 417 PMG.

⁴¹ Revermann (2006) 254–9, following a suggestion in Taplin (1993) 58 n. 7, argues that the ending of *Lysistrata* was not originally composed for an Athenian audience but was a later addition for a Spartan or Spartan-derived audience at a reperformance. If true, this claim would clearly have ramifications for my argument at this point, but I find such a radical solution unnecessary, since it is equally possible to find ways in which the play’s ending is dramatically effective. For example, the mention of Athene as a Spartan goddess rather than an Athenian might underscore the play’s presentation of the essential similarities between Athenians and Spartans. If one wished to take the play’s message less straightforwardly one could alternatively argue that focusing on Spartan ritual and presenting Athene as a Spartan goddess causes a sense of tension within the audience which alerts them to the unreal nature of the comic fantasy. In any case, the fact that the ending is unusual does not seem to me sufficient reason to suppose that it is not original, or that it could not be poetically effective for an Athenian audience.

PARTHENEIA IN TRAGEDY

Tragedy is rich in choruses of young women, so one might well expect to find *partheneia* reflected in the plays: the 'occasion' for a *partheneion* is latent in any tragedy which contains a chorus of *parthenoi*. As we have seen, the identity of the performers is central to *partheneia* in a way which is qualitatively different from other genres. In a tragic context, this creates new complexities. The tragic chorus is composed of adult males, not young females. When a male chorus presenting itself as *parthenoi* alludes to *partheneia*, it is more than a simple act of mimesis; the choreuts do not just take on the personae of *parthenoi*, but also allude to the ritual and social functions such a chorus could perform in a community. A tragic chorus singing a *paian* is in some sense *actually* singing a *paian*, even though the song is removed from its real-life implications by its incorporation within the tragic mimesis. A chorus performing a *partheneion* enters into a second order of mimesis: they become not only a chorus of (for example) Spartan slave-girls, but also represent a chorus of *parthenoi* performing the ritual for their own community.

If Athenian *partheneia* ritual did not include choral performance, this creates another degree of alienation, as the audience observes a custom which is familiar but did not form part of their own *rites de passage*. As we shall see, this extra layer of representation interacts in interesting and complex ways with the text. The effect of a citizen chorus undergoing what is a defining feature of a different social group adds a new angle to these tensions.

The difficulty of identifying *partheneia* makes it harder to spot allusions in tragedy than with some other genres. Nevertheless, we do find this transitional language surrounding young female characters, often ones who are being prevented from making the transition to adulthood (and therefore marriage).⁴² Thus, for example, we find parthenaic overtones at the beginning of Euripides' *Electra*, where we are encouraged to see Electra as a figure stuck in a liminal state between *parthenos* and *gunē*. The Chorus, a group of young women

⁴² I discuss language which is specifically marital in the following chapter.

(παρθένοι Μυκηνίδες, 761), enter and sing of the religious procession which the girls of Argos will make in honour of Hera (πάσαι δὲ παρ' Ἡ-/ραν μέλλουσιν παρθενικαὶ στείχειν, 173–4). The idea of choral dances as part of this ritual is made explicit a few lines later, when Electra imagines these dances to stress her isolation from them (οὐδ' ἰστάσα χοροὺς / Ἀργείαις ἄμα νύμφαις / εἰλικτὸν κρούσω πόδ' ἐμόν, 'I shall not set up choruses along with the brides of Argos, beating my whirling step', 178–80).⁴³ As in parthenaic song, we see attention to finery and accessories. Here, however, the point is to contrast the feminine beauty of the dancing girls with Electra's situation. Electra sets the finery and ornaments suitable for the dance (ἀγλαΐας . . . χρυσεῖς ὄρμοις, 175–7) against her own dirty clothing and hair (πιναρὰν κόμαν / καὶ τρύχη τάδ' ἐμῶν πέπλων, 184–5). Whereas hair is normally a mechanism for expressing female desirability, here it becomes a symbol of Electra's neglected state. When the Chorus offer her suitable clothing and adornments (190–2), she rejects them explaining that she is wasting away in a wretched situation (208–12). As we have seen, parthenaic song pays particular attention to female finery and trappings, and does so in order to praise the girls on display and to emphasize their desirability. In this case Electra's lack of finery is used to suggest her failure to make the transition from *parthenos* to *gunē* correctly, as exemplified through her fake marriage to the Peasant. Indeed, Electra herself makes this point explicitly later in the scene, as she describes her state to Orestes. Again she emphasizes her exclusion from ritual activities and choral dance (ἀνέορτος ἱερῶν καὶ χορῶν τητωμένη, 310), yet explains that as a *parthenos* she is also debarred from the company of the adult women (ἀναίνομαι γυναῖκας οὐσα παρθένος, 311). Her embarrassment before her former suitor Castor (αἰσχύνομαι δὲ Κάστορ', ὅς πρὶν ἐς θεοὺς / ἐλθεῖν ἔμ' ἐμνήστευεν, 312–13), again encourages us to connect female transition and ritual activity.⁴⁴ Just as a *partheneion* dwells on the ritual activities, beauty, and finery of its participants in

⁴³ Cf. Zeitlin (1970) 650: the mention of parthenaic dances is 'another indication of the awkwardness of [Electra's] ambiguous status'.

⁴⁴ As Cropp (1988) on 312–13 notes, the presence of prospective suitors at parthenaic dances is relevant to understanding Electra's comments and the difficulty of her situation here.

order to enhance their attractiveness, here Electra inverts the *topos*, dwelling on her squalid state rather than her ornaments (305–6) and her demeaning labour rather than ritual actions (307). In her relationship with the Chorus she becomes an anti-Hagesichora: she is separated from the other women by being below rather than above them, and her separation is reflected not by her taking up a special place in the ritual, but by her having no place at all. However, Electra's status as a failed *parthenos*, unable to make the transition to maturity, is picked up at the end of the play where she is offered a new and more suitable marriage to Pylades (1249, 1340–1).

A similar technique is to use transitional language of what is in fact rape or abduction. One common way of doing this is the portrayal of rape as marriage, discussed in the following chapter. However, we also find more generally parthenaic imagery used to create this effect. For example in *Trojan Women* the Chorus recall the sack of Troy by remembering the dances of *parthenoi* that took place around the Trojan horse: 'the maidens lifted their stamping feet and sang a joyful song' (παρθένοι δ' / ἄειρον ἄμα κρότον ποδῶν / βοάν τ' ἔμελλον εὖφρον', 545–7). More maiden dances occur at the moment of the Greek attack when the Chorus describe themselves participating in a choral dance in honour of Artemis, herself described as *parthenos*: 'at that time I was dancing in the choruses for the maiden daughter of Zeus, around the temple' (τότ' ἀμφὶ μέλαθρα παρθένον / Διὸς κόραν ἐμελπόμαν / χοροῖσι, 552–5). However, whereas choruses of *parthenoi* are usually a location for girls to be admired by prospective suitors (or sometimes even snatched away by gods), here the onlookers turn out to be the victorious Greeks. Rather than achieving a legitimate marriage, the transition that the young women undergo is to become the concubines of the foreign army: '[the destruction of Troy] brought a garland of girls to Greece, to bear children' (νεανίδων στέφανον ἔφερον / Ἑλλάδι κουροτρόφον, 565–6).

Similarly in *Hecuba* the Chorus of captive women imagine their future slavery in Greece, and ironically describe it in the language of the ritual transition of free-born girls: the Delian maidens' songs in honour of Artemis: 'shall I, along with the Delian maidens, sing of the golden headband and bow of the goddess Artemis?' (σὺν Δηλιάσιν τε κού-/ραισιν Ἀρτέμιδος θεᾶς / χρυσέαν τ' ἄμπυκα τόξα τ' εὐλογήσω; 462–5), and the weaving of the Panathenaic *peplos* by the Athenian

arrhēphoroi (ἡ Παλλάδος ἐν πόλει / τὰς καλλιδίφρους Ἀθα-/Ιναίας ἐν κροκέῳ πέπλῳ / ζεύξομαι, 466–9). Later in the play this Chorus too recall the sack of Troy, and again use language which evokes the transition of young girls. They describe themselves as arranging their hair and putting it into a cap, thus drawing our attention to ideas of female adornment and desirability: ‘I was arranging my braided hair beneath a headband, looking at the boundless rays of my golden mirror’ (ἐγὼ δὲ πλόκαμον ἀναδέτοις / μίτραισιν ἐρρυθμιζόμαν / χρυσεῶν ἐνόπτρων λεύσσουσ’ ἀτέρμονας εἰς αὐγὰς, 923–5).⁴⁵ Upon hearing the sound of the attacking army, their assimilation with *parthenoi* becomes stronger, as they leave their marriage bed (λέχη . . . λιποῦσα, 933–4), dress like a Dorian unmarried girl (Δωρὶς ὡς κόρα, 934), and go to the temple of Artemis (σεμνὰν προσίζουσ’ οὐκ ἦνυσ’ Ἀρτεμιν ἁ τλάμων, 935), thus implicitly asking for the protection of the virgin goddesses from the male invaders. As their attempt fails they are described as ‘led away to the sea’ (ἀγόμεν . . . ἐπὶ πέλαγος, 936–7) but the phrasing again suggests female sexuality, for the verb ἄγομαι in its middle form can be used of marriage and bringing home a wife. These choruses are not themselves *parthenoi* but adult women, as made clear by their recollection of their husbands (*Tro.* 1081, *Hec.* 919, 936). However, because of the *topos* of contrasting rape and marriage, these women when raped and abducted are envisaged as though they were *parthenoi* once more, and are described in imagistic terms as girls whose transition to maturity becomes perverted into violence rather than legitimate marriage. By symbolically presenting them as young girls, the poignancy of their abduction becomes more apparent, for we are encouraged to see how they are being denied their normal expectations as women.

Unsurprisingly, sustained allusion to *partheneia* is particularly a feature of plays where gender, female sexuality, and the transition to female maturity is of importance. In this section, I will examine two plays where this theme is particularly marked because of their connection to real-life ritual practice: Euripides’ *Iphigeneia among the Taurians* and *Helen*.

⁴⁵ Cf. Alc. fr. 1.67–70, where a Lydian hairpiece (μίτρα Λυδία) and a girl’s hair are listed among the chorus’s finery.

Parallel stories, parallel rites

It has often been noted that *IT* and *Helen* follow a similar story pattern. Both protagonists are women removed by divine intervention from their homelands and forced to live in a foreign land against their will, accompanied by a chorus of *parthenoi*. They are discovered by a male *kurios*, who eventually recognizes them and is able to help them return to Greece, but in both cases the escape involves facing dangers along the way. This pattern led Guépin to coin the term ‘*anodos* dramas’, explaining Euripides’ narrative as modelled on the myth of Persephone’s abduction, separation, and return from the underworld, an argument that has since been accepted by many scholars.⁴⁶ Persephone is an archetype of virginity as her cult title *Korē* suggests, but unlike the perpetual virgin goddesses she is specifically the virgin whose virginity cannot last. As van Gennep noted (1960), the pattern of separation, mock-death, and return is a common way of expressing transitions in many cultures, and Persephone’s story thus makes literal the concerns involved in the *rite de passage* of any young girl. Because of their structural similarities to transition ritual, the two plays form a good starting point in the search for parthenaic allusions.⁴⁷ However, the plays also share another feature which makes them particularly interesting for our purposes: both contain protagonists who are themselves recipients of parthenaic cult.

Helen was undoubtedly an important figure in the lives of Spartan *parthenoi*. The precise details of her cults in Laconia are difficult to ascertain, but literary sources attest various practices in her honour connected with female sexual development.⁴⁸ For our purposes, we can note that her worship is associated with ritual performances by

⁴⁶ Guépin (1968) 120–2 and 137–42. The fullest exposition of how this motif works in the plays is given by Foley (1992), but see also Pippin (1960) 156; Wolff (1973) 63–4; Segal (1971) esp. 569–73.

⁴⁷ As Luschig (1972) notes, the two plays also share a theme of reality and illusion: this also assists the mixing of ‘real’ and allegorical levels of discourse which we see in their handling of parthenaic motifs.

⁴⁸ For a detailed account of the evidence for Helen’s cult, see Parker (forthcoming).

adolescent girls, including dances and running races.⁴⁹ At the end of Theocritus' *Epithalamion for Helen* (18), the chorus of girls intend to commemorate Helen's departure from parthenaic status by making offerings to her at the plane tree, suggesting a premarital ritual performed by women (38–48).⁵⁰ In both *Helen* and *Lysistrata*, Helen is also linked with two other cults: Apollo Amyclaeus and Athene Chalcioikos. Calame argues that this also indicates Helen's status as a liminal figure: Apollo Amyclaeus is worshipped at the Hyacinthia, probably a festival of initiation, while Athene Chalcioikos may represent the young girl who has successfully passed through adolescence and been admitted to the citizen body.⁵¹

To an Athenian audience, Iphigeneia's cult would have been a much closer one, for she had a *herōon* at Brauron, where she was associated with the cult of Artemis. She also had a cult in Megara, next to the temple of Artemis, while Pausanias describes a temple of Artemis with a statue of Iphigeneia at nearby Aegeira.⁵² The cult at Brauron was associated with the *arkteia* ritual, which was considered of crucial importance for the assimilation of girls into the *polis* (discussed further below). The girls who participated in the *arkteia* seem to have been considerably younger than those associated with the cult of Helen, but the ritual is nevertheless related to the development towards eventual marriageability. Sourvinou-Inwood

⁴⁹ Theocritus 18.22–5, Aristoph. *Lys.* 1296–1320, and Eur. *Hel.* 1465–77 all refer to the dances and races taking place on the banks of the Eurotas, which as Calame notes fits the location of one of the cult sites. Calame (1977) 1: 336–44 suggests two separate cults for Helen in Sparta, one in her aspect as a married woman, and the other as a *parthenos*, but as Parker (forthcoming) 19–20 notes, we have no evidence to suggest separate cult functions at different ritual centres.

⁵⁰ We have no direct evidence of the plane tree cult, but Paus. 3.15.3 mentions a cult of Helen at Platanistas, the name of which he derives from the nearby plane trees (3.14.8). See Gow (1952) on Theoc. 18.43–8.

⁵¹ Calame (1977) 1: 340–1. For the cult of Hyacinthus see Wide (1893) 285–93, Kannicht (1969) 383–5, Calame (1977) 1: 309–17. For the cult of the Leucippides with which Helen also may be associated, see Wide (1893) 326–32, Kannicht (1969) 381–3, Calame (1977) 1: 323–30. For an overview of Helen's cult in Sparta, see Parker (forthcoming).

⁵² Pausanias 1.43.1 (on Megara), 7.26.5 (on Aegeira). Dowden (1989) 9–23 untangles references to these various cult centres.

suggests it is linked to the onset of menstruation, which forms the first stage in the process of moving from *parthenos* to *gunē*.⁵³

Both plays are structured in a manner evocative of parthenaic song. Both have choruses of young girls closely connected to the protagonists, who repeatedly express their fondness and concern for the woman singled out as 'special'. At the end of both plays, the protagonists return to their homelands while the other girls remain in exile, unable to make the journey back to Greece. In Alcman's parthenaic fragments, the girl or girls who are described as more desirable than the rest of the chorus are also portrayed as separated from the other girls. Thus commentators have noted Hagesichora and Agido's separation from the other girls, and indeed have argued over whether the two girls are conceptualized as part of the chorus at all.⁵⁴ Whereas the chorus begin by emphasizing Hagesichora's presence, they later go on to alert us to her absence (οὐ γὰρ ἂ καλλίσφυρος / Ἀγησιχ[ό]ρ[α] πᾶρ' αὐτεῖ, 78–9).⁵⁵ The description of Agido with the chorus as a horse among flocks (45–7) serves not only to emphasize her beauty but also to suggest that she is somehow qualitatively different from the other girls. Similarly in fr. 3 *PMGF* the chorus yearn to be close to Astymeloisa (61–3) but are unable to: she does not respond to them (64) and moves away (70). We find this motif deployed more explicitly in Theocritus 18, where Helen is separated for marriage so cannot return to the chorus and the girlish activities they previously enjoyed together:

ὦ καλὰ, ὦ χαρίεσσα κόρα, τὸ μὲν οἰκέτις ἤδη.
 ἄμμες δ' ἐς Δρόμον ἦρι καὶ ἐς λειμώνια φύλλα
 ἐρψεύμεν στεφάνως δρεψεύμεναι ἄδὸν πνέοντας,
 πολλὰ τεοῦς, Ἑλένα, μεμναμένοι ὥς γαλαθηναί
 ἄρνες γειναμένας ὄϊος μαστὸν ποθέοισαι. (38–42)

O beautiful, O graceful girl, you are now a housewife. But as for us, early in the morning we will go to the Dromos and the leafy meadows to pluck

⁵³ Sourvinou-Inwood (1988) 21–30.

⁵⁴ For the detachment of Hagesichora and Agido, see Puelma (1977) 46–8; Calame (1983) 312–13; Peponi (2004) 298. Hooker (1979) 215 goes as far as to set Hagesichora entirely apart from the chorus, though most commentators agree that (as her name suggests) she is their leader.

⁵⁵ Cf. Hutchinson (2001) on 78–9.

sweet-smelling garlands, often remembering you, Helen, just as suckling lambs long for the teat of the sheep.

Here, Helen's companions contrast the duties of Helen's new life with the wildness of girlhood, while the relationship between the older and the younger girls is encapsulated by the simile of the lambs. Helen's relationship with the other girls is portrayed as maternal and protective, reminiscent of the way that Alcman's girls look to Hagesichora for preservation. Yet the girls' separation from Helen is likened to the weaning of young animals from their mother: a necessary part of the life-cycle.

Female transitional periods often involve spending time in what is symbolically a wild or secluded state, removed from the ties of city or family—as actualized in the ritual of the *arkteia* at Brauron.⁵⁶ In the case of Iphigeneia and Helen in the tragedies that bear their names, they are physically removed and kept prisoner in a foreign land along with the chorus of *parthenoi*. At the end of the play, they are able to return to their homeland through the assistance of Orestes and Menelaus. While the other girls are unable to come with them, their departure is nevertheless said to offer hope that they too may be rescued in the future (*IT* 1067–8; *Hel.* 1387–9). Thus the transition undertaken by the protagonists may also enable the other *parthenoi* to undergo this symbolic journey to sexual maturity.

These two plays therefore contain a complex relationship to *partheneia* ritual. They represent some kind of aetiology for the ritual, through the figures of the heroines who are known to the audience as divinities responsible for managing similar rituals in their own lives. However, Iphigeneia and Helen appear not as powerful deities but as women themselves faced with a challenging and dangerous transition. The language used in the play of both women, particularly in choral passages, alludes to the detail of this ritual. The identity of the choruses in the play is therefore at times blurred, incorporating elements from the tragic chorus (of male Athenians), the characters they represent (the girls marooned with Iphigeneia

⁵⁶ Burkert (1979) 6–7 argues for leaving home and seclusion or wanderings as one of the central motifs in this type of myth. See also Dowden (1989) 142, and Katz (1999), who argues that the presentation of Io's wanderings in the *Prometheus Bound* is designed to trigger these associations.

and Helen), and actual parthenaic choruses, as their song suggests they are participating in the ritual with which the protagonists are symbolically linked.

IPHIGENEIA AMONG THE TAURIANS

Myth and cult

The Iphigeneia myth is frequently used to express the risks and worries associated with female transition. Iphigeneia's sacrifice is brought about on the pretext of marriage (to Achilles); instead of achieving this marriage she is killed, thus actualizing the way transition is symbolically associated with death.⁵⁷ In the version of the myth Euripides uses, the transition is not allowed to go ahead: Artemis intervenes, substituting a deer for Iphigeneia and removing her to a remote location, where she remains a *parthenos* and is responsible for maintaining the cult of Artemis. Iphigeneia's identification with a wild animal and her separation from civilization is suggestive of how female development is seen as a state of wilderness before an eventual return to the community. Iphigeneia, as a *parthenos* whose development to maturity has been interrupted, is kept in a state of wildness and isolation. Moreover, like other failed *parthenoi* such as the Sirens, she becomes a source of danger to men, killing them as a form of worship to Artemis, the goddess of virginity. On a literal level it is only through her renewed dependence on a male *kurios* that she is able to achieve a homecoming, while her symbolic role in female transition ritual is suggested by the mention of her future status at Brauron at the play's end (1462–7). The new cult is thus constructed as an alternative mode of engagement with young

⁵⁷ Cf. Rehm (1994) *passim* on the marriage to death motif; Loraux (1987) 31–48 on sacrificing virgins in tragedy as a symbolic act. Iphigeneia is symbolically linked to female transition in Aesch. Ag. 239, where her shedding of the saffron robe (κρόκου βαφὰς δ' ἐς πέδον χέουσα) evokes the shedding of the *krokōtos* by the Brauronian *arktoi*: see Sourvinou (1971); Stinton (1976).

girls' sexuality, and offers a new and positive role for Iphigeneia to play in a Greek community.

For an Athenian audience, Iphigeneia's association with female transition ritual is particularly strong because of her role in the rites at Brauron.⁵⁸ The cult at Brauron is well attested by both documentary and archaeological evidence. Excavations of the site have revealed the sixth-century temple of Artemis, as well as a fifth-century stoa. Inscriptions from the site also name a *Parthenon*: presumably a religious space for the *parthenoi* resident at the sanctuary.⁵⁹ The most famous of Brauron's rituals was the *arkteia*, an initiatory rite for young girls, which took place every four years. The *arkteia* is depicted in the small vases known as *krateriskoi* which have been found at Brauron and at other sites connected with Artemis, which show girls running, dancing, and involved in other ritual activities.⁶⁰ The central role of the *arkteia* in Athenian life is demonstrated by its inclusion in the list in *Lysistrata* of prestigious activities for freeborn girls (κατ' ἔχουσα τὸν κροκωτὸν ἄρκτος ἢ Βραυρωνίους, 645). Various sources, including the *Suda* (α 3958 = i. 361. 4 Adler), claim that participation in the *arkteia* was a requirement for all Athenian girls. However, this is not only contradicted elsewhere (for example, the scholiast on *Lysistrata* 645 speaks of ἐπιλεγόμεναι παρθένοι ('selected girls')), but also seems impractical given the numbers involved.⁶¹ The idea of universal participation is nevertheless telling, as it indicates the degree of importance which the *arkteia* was believed to hold for Athenian women. Even if only selected girls in fact took part, it seems plausible that the ritual was conceptualized as a more general projection of the age group and its

⁵⁸ See Parker (2005) 240–1 for Iphigeneia and the Brauron cult. The scholiast on Aristoph. *Lys.* 645a–b also records a variant of the Brauron myth which states that Iphigeneia's sacrifice took place at Brauron rather than Aulis.

⁵⁹ *IG I*³ 403. For a full account of the issues involved in reconstructing the site, see Parker (2005) 228–30 and notes.

⁶⁰ For the *krateriskoi* see Kahlil (1963); (1965); (1977); (1981); Palaiokrassa (1991). For a full survey of the activities depicted and the presentation of the girls, see Hamilton (1989) 450–7.

⁶¹ For an account of the sources and the debate, see Sourvinou-Inwood (1988); Dowden (1989) 24–31.

importance, thus upholding the ideal that every girl should go through the ritual.⁶²

The age at which girls became *arktoi* is also disputed. The *Lysistrata* scholiast and the *Suda* give explicit age limits: no older than 10 and no younger than 5. These are difficult to reconcile with the way in which Aristophanes presents the *arkteia*, and in particular with the Chorus's statement that they were *arrhēphoroi* as well as *arktoi* (ἐπτα μὲν ἔτη γεγῶσ' εὐθὺς ἡρρηφόρουσιν, 642), but it may be that they are simply listing prestigious female activities, and we should not take literally the idea that a single woman could participate in all of them. It seems most likely that *arktoi* were aged between 5 and 10, with 10 as the symbolically charged age on which the rite was focused. The *arkteia*, then, is clearly not meant to represent the girls' transition to marriageable status. However, the comment in the *Suda* that no girl could be married unless she had participated (whether true or just a cultural ideal) shows that its function was one connected with sexual maturity.⁶³ One of the rituals appeared to have involved the wearing and removing of the *krokōtos*: a female garment associated with sensuality and marriageability. Thus the wearing of the *krokōtos* by the *arktoi* hints at the journey they are making towards sexual maturity.⁶⁴ The *arkteia* marks the beginning of the transition from child to *parthenos*. The upper age limit is the

⁶² It has been suggested that families who did not put their daughters through the rites could achieve token participation by dedicating a *krateriskos*: see Arrigoni (1985) 103; Dowden (1989) 28. Faraone (2003) 47 finds this explanation unsatisfactory because of the problematic nature of representative initiation, but we should rather see the *arktoi* as representing the cohort 'in the sense that the ritual represents something about the meaning of that age-class to the wider community' (Redfield (2003) 91). See also Parker (2005) 227–8.

⁶³ Faraone (2003) queries whether the *arkteia* is an initiatory ritual at all, and suggests that the girls' service is a substitute for a sacrifice rather than related to maturation. However, I agree with Parker (2005) 238–45 that he makes too strong a dichotomy between the various functions that the rite holds. Faraone sees the ritual as one of propitiation not initiation, but the sacrifice or 'tithe' to Artemis can be understood as compensation for the ultimate loss of the girls' virginity: cf. Men. fr. 38 K–A, where pregnant women ask Artemis to forgive the loss of their virginity. The unanimous claim in the sources that the *arkteia* is a precondition of marriage also makes a connection with female maturation likely.

⁶⁴ Parker (2005) 242–3 points out the analogies between the *arkteia* and other premarital rituals across Greece, and also notes the symbolic importance of the wearing of the *krokōtos*.

significant one: this is the oldest a girl could be allowed to get without having gone through the ritual, and it ties in with the earliest age for menarche.⁶⁵

As well as the *arkteia*, the play also alludes to another ritual: the dedication of the clothes of women who died in childbirth (ἄγαλμά σοι θήσουσιν εὐπῆγους ὑφάς / ἄς ἂν γυναῖκες ἐν τόκοις ψυχορραγεῖς / λίπωσ' ἐν οἴκοις, 1465–7). This ritual is not attested elsewhere, but might nevertheless have reflected real cult practice.⁶⁶ Whether true or not, however, the ritual can be seen as a transitional activity, for a girl's transition from childhood to womanhood was regarded as an extended process, beginning at puberty and ending with the birth of her first child.⁶⁷ Both the childbirth ritual and the *arkteia* should be envisaged as symbolic moments in the larger transition with which all *partheneia* ritual is concerned, rather than sharp cut-off points in their own right. The two rituals at Brauron therefore mark the beginning and end points of this critical period, guiding the girls through the risks associated with this process.

The cult at Brauron, then, was associated with female sexual development, and its two major rituals marked the passage from childhood, through maidenhood, and into fully fledged maturity as a married woman and mother. The prominence of the *arkteia* means that these transitional overtones would have been apparent to an Athenian audience as they watched a play depicting the cult's aetiology. Moreover, as we learn from the pictures on *krateriskoi*, dancing was among the ritual activities undertaken by the young *arktoi*; indeed, Robert Parker argues that the *arkteia* provides a rare form of choral training for Attic girls.⁶⁸ Moreover, for the Chorus of

⁶⁵ Sourvinou-Inwood (1988) 21–30, Dowden (1989) 28–31.

⁶⁶ Inscriptions from Brauron show that (living) women dedicated their own and their children's clothes to Artemis: Cropp (2000) on 1464–7 believes Euripides may be drawing on real practice, while Kyriakou (2006) is more sceptical, as is Scullion (1999–2000). Parker (2005) 142 n. 28, however, argues (rightly in my opinion) that 'invention of actual cult facts... would seem to undermine the aition's function of tying the past to a known present'.

⁶⁷ Cf. Dowden (1989) 43–4, who quotes Cantarella (1987) 47, who argues that it was only bearing a child that marked the woman's definitive and irreversible passage into the *oikos* of her husband.

⁶⁸ For the iconographic sources for the rites see Kahlil (1965) and (1977); Lonsdale (1993) 187. For the *arkteia* and choral training, see Parker (2005) 243.

parthenoi themselves to be in a pre-transitional state is itself suggestive of the rite the play evokes. On a 'logical' level the *parthenoi* who form the Chorus of *IT* are too old to be *arktoi*, but nevertheless their language evokes parthenaic song and female transitional activities, and so their performance triggers associations in the minds of the audience.⁶⁹

Iphigeneia as a *parthenos*

From the opening of the play, Iphigeneia construes herself as a parthenaic figure and consistently describes her situation in terms overlaid with sexual and transitional imagery. At the time of her sacrifice she has just reached sexual maturity, as is demonstrated by her false marriage to Achilles (25, 216–17). The symbolism in using a marriage to lure her to sacrifice is clear, and is a common tragic device: the *parthenos*' transition to maturity, often construed as a symbolic death, is enacted in tragedy as a real death.⁷⁰ Indeed, Iphigeneia herself makes this point explicitly when she describes her supplication of Agamemnon, when she contrasted the wedding music performed in the house with the reality of her fate, and told him he is marrying her to Hades rather than Achilles (364–71). In the case of Iphigeneia, however, the 'marriage-to-death' motif is altered: the sacrifice/transition does not in fact happen properly. Instead the girl is spirited away and her previous status preserved. The replacement of her body with that of a deer indicates her continuing connection to Artemis and the wilderness, and hence that she remains a *parthenos* like the mythological girls who are turned into animals instead of being raped. Iphigeneia indeed describes herself as a *μόςχος* at the moment of her sacrifice (359), tying into this strand of imagery.

We are told at the start of the play that Iphigeneia was owed to the goddess as the most beautiful of the fruits of the year (ὅτι γὰρ ἐνιαυτὸς τέκοι / κάλλιστον, ἡϋξω φωσφόρῳ θύσειν θεᾷ, 20–1). The *topos* of describing female sexuality in terms of vegetal growth is used

⁶⁹ For the similarities between Iphigeneia's story and the *arkteia* myth, see Tzane-tou (1999–2000) 201–4.

⁷⁰ See pp. 251–3 below.

to explain Artemis' right to deny Iphigeneia's transition: Agamemnon has vowed a tithe of the growth of the land and this includes his daughter, whose fruits must be given up to the goddess rather than harvested. Instead of participating in activities which allow her to progress from *parthenos* to *gunē*, Iphigeneia is forced to serve the cult of Artemis, whose rituals demand that she re-enact the same type of blood-sacrifice that cut off her own development. Her actions are understood as vengeance for her own failed transition: thus the Herdsman comments that the death of the courageous strangers will be suitable vengeance for Iphigeneia (καὶ ἀναλίσκης ξένους / τοιούσδε, τὸν σὸν Ἑλλάς ἀποτείσει φόνον / δίκας τίνουσα τῆς ἐν Αἰλίδι σφαγῆς, 337–9), while Iphigeneia claims to Thoas that she shows no mercy to the strangers because of her own treatment in Greece (πᾶσάν γε μισοῦσ' Ἑλλάδ', ἥ μ' ἀπώλεσεν, 1187). Thus as a *parthenos* whose own transition was a failure, Iphigeneia becomes a figure whose sexual status is destructive and threatening.⁷¹

Iphigeneia's own description of her plight also makes use of transitional language. She perceives her misfortune to date back to her own conception, and to Clytemnestra's own loss of virginity (τὰς ματρὸς ζώνας, 204). Recalling her upbringing, she speaks of the Fates as controlling childbirth (λόχιαί . . . Μοῖραι, 206–7), evoking the final landmark of female transition. She then goes on to speak of her own failed transition, recalling her wooing (ἃ μναστευθεῖσ' ἐξ Ἑλλάνων, 208) and fake marriage to Achilles (νύμφαν, οἶμοι, δύσνυμφον / τῷ τὰς Νηρέως κούρας, αἰαί, 216–17). She continues to assimilate her own fertility to that of the natural world, speaking of herself as a young shoot (θάλος, 209) and a sacrificial animal (σφάγιον . . . καὶ θύμ', 211–12). She then goes on to specifically lament that she has been deprived of her normal expectations as a female:

- νῦν ἀξείνου πόντου ξείνα
 δυσχόρτους οἴκους ναίω,
 ἄγαμος ἄτεκνος ἄπολις ἄφιλος, (220)
 ἃ μναστευθεῖσ' ἐξ Ἑλλάνων, (208)
 οὐ τὰν Ἀργεῖ μέλπουσ' Ἦραν (221)
 οὐδ' ἱστοῖς ἐν καλλιφθόγοις

⁷¹ Cf. Tzanetou (1999–2000) 205.

κερκίδι Παλλάδος Ἀθίδος εἰκὼ
 <καὶ> Τιτάνων ποικίλλουσ', ἀλλ'
 †αἰμόρραντον δυσφόρμιγγα (225)
 ξείνων αἰμάσσουσ' ἄταν βωμοὺς,†
 οἰκτρὰν τ' αἰαζόντων αὐδὰν
 οἰκτρὸν τ' ἐκβαλλόντων δάκρυον. (218–28)

But now I live in an infertile home, a stranger by a sea that welcomes no strangers, with no marriage, no children, no city, no friend, I who was wooed by the Greeks. I do not sing to Hera of Argos, do not embroider with my shuttle the image of Athenian Pallas and the Titans to the sweet song of my loom. Instead, a blood-sprinkled fate, no song for the lyre, I make the altars bloody with the piteous cry of strangers wailing, hurling out piteous tears.

In contrast to the imagery of female fertility we have seen earlier in the play, Iphigeneia now emphasizes the barrenness of her new state. The space she inhabits is itself infertile (*δυσχόρτους οἴκους*, 219), in contrast with the fertility of Greece that the Chorus recalled earlier in the exchange (*Ἑλλάδος εὐίππου πύργους / καὶ τείχῃ χόρτων τ' εὐδένδρων*, 132–3). The assonance and repetition of *ἄγαμος*, *ἄτεκνος*, *ἄπολις*, *ἄφιλος* (220) highlights Iphigeneia's isolation from the structures and support of civilized society, as well as reminding us of her unusual state as a perpetual *parthenos*, deprived of the familial relations other women can aspire to.

In stressing this isolation from civilization Iphigeneia focuses on ritual activities of women in the *polis*.⁷² She first mentions ceremonies honouring Hera at Argos (221), rituals evoked in Euripides' *Electra* in a parthenaic context (see p. 190 above). She then imagines weaving a robe for Athene with images of the battle between the gods and the Titans (222–4), an allusion to the weaving of the Panathenaic *peplos*, which would carry powerful resonances for the audience.⁷³ The production of the robe was a prestigious activity, only open to selected women of high status. Mansfield, who analyses the sources on the *peplos* in some detail, concludes that the actual weaving of the robe was done entirely by the *arrhēphoroi*, young girls selected from noble families who were dedicated to the service of

⁷² Cf. Goff (1999) 112.

⁷³ See England (1886), Weil (1907), Platnauer (1938) on 221–4.

Athene for a year.⁷⁴ The production of the *peplos* was thus a symbolic way of introducing the *arrhēphoroi* to weaving, an activity which in itself represents the duties of adult women. Thus the weaving of the robe signified these girls' journey towards adulthood (and therefore the journeys of other girls in their age group).⁷⁵ The allusion to the *arrhēphoroi* therefore hints at a mode of service to a goddess by girls that enriches the community (as opposed to the horrific rites at Tauris) and an associated transition rite integrating them into their roles as adults.⁷⁶

The merging of these rituals from different *poleis* is also a hint that *IT* presents these issues of female transition as a general concern which transcends particular cults and rituals. The rites at Brauron may come from the same community as the Panathenaic *peplos*, but they form a different ritual aimed at a different deity, while the ritual for Hera comes from another *polis* altogether. Euripides encourages us to make a connection between these two practices and the cult at Brauron whose aetiology the play presents (1462–3). Different parthenaic rituals are thus explicitly construed as linked, regardless of the details of their context and function within their community. We can therefore be unafraid of drawing from our knowledge of Spartan or Boeotian parthenaic practice, and using it to help us decode the symbols within the play.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ See Mansfield (1985) 277–81. He draws on two decrees (*IG* II/III² 1036b and 1060), from the same stele, which honour over 100 *parthenoi* for working the wool (i.e. processing the raw wool and spinning the yarn), and separately honour the girls who made the robe, implying it was done by separate groups of people. Among the girls honoured in the first category, several are identifiable as daughters of the most prominent Athenian families. The scholiast on Eur. *Hec.* 473 describes those involved in making the robe as being both married women and young girls, but elsewhere our sources seem to point towards *parthenoi*, and it seems to have been primarily a parthenaic activity.

⁷⁵ Cf. Jenkins (1994) 38–9. For the *arrhēphoroi* and the symbolism of their role see Burkert (1966*b*), Simon (2002) 39–46, Mansfield (1985) 260–301.

⁷⁶ Similarly, at Eur. *Hec.* 455–74 (discussed above, pp. 191–2), the chorus imagine weaving the battle of the Titans on a robe for Athene along with performing in a chorus at Delos, both high-status activities for free-born women. Presumably in this case the point is that these activities define the citizen women's role in the community, and so will be inappropriate for the chorus, who are now slaves.

⁷⁷ Hamilton (1989) discusses the similarities between Athenian, Theban, and Spartan parthenaic ritual.

The Chorus

Iphigeneia's use of parthenaic language is picked up by the Chorus. Their initial words in the play are a prayer to Artemis (*ὦ παῖ τᾷς Λατοῦς, / Δίκτυνν' οὐρεΐα*, 126–7). In explaining their service to the goddess, the Chorus describe themselves as 'walking upon virginal feet' (*ὁσίας ὁσιον πόδα παρθένιον*, 130), emphasizing their sexual status as integral to their religious role. The Chorus describe themselves as having left their ancestral home (*πατρῶων οἴκων ἔδρας*, 136), but whereas girls would normally leave their father's house in order to marry, these girls have instead been dedicated to religious service in perpetual virginity. The fertility of Greece is emphasized (133–4) and contrasted with the rocky and inhospitable nature of their new home (*πόντου . . . πέτρας ἀξείνου*, 124–5).

These ideas are picked up once more in the first stasimon (392–466), a song which consists of the Chorus wondering who the newly captured strangers are and imagining their journey to Tauris. The ode opens with a recollection of the wanderings of Io, who crossed over the Bosphorus to Asia:

*κύνειαι κύνειαι σύνοδοι θαλάσσας,
ἔν' οἷστρος ἢ πέτόμενος Ἀργόθεν ἢ
ἄξενον ἐπ' οἶδμα διεπέρασεν < >
Ἀσιήτιδα γαῖαν
Εὐρώπας διαμείψας.* (392–8)

Dark blue eddies of the sea, where the gadfly which flew from Argos passed over the inhospitable waters, moving from Europe to the land of Asia.

Within the context of the ode, Io is one in a series of mythological journeys involving the sea: the Chorus go on to mention Phineus and the Nereids, and to imagine Achilles on the mythical White Island. However, Io also acts as an analogue for Iphigeneia: she too is a *parthenos* whose transition to maturity was disrupted. Just as Iphigeneia was substituted with an animal, Io was literally turned into one, and her transformation into a heifer reflects Iphigeneia's self-description as a *μόςχος* (359). Like Iphigeneia, Io was prevented from reaching adult sexuality by divine intervention, and instead faced a period of isolation in a wild state, before her eventual rescue and

return to human form.⁷⁸ The forced journey from Europe to Asia also reflects the plight of Iphigeneia and the Chorus, who, like Io, are victims of the gods.⁷⁹ As the Chorus turn to the strangers' arrival more directly, we again see the contrast between the fertility of Greece and the barrenness of Tauris.⁸⁰ Greece is described by the rivers Eurotas and Dirce, whose waters are praised and called 'holy' (τὸν εὐδρον δονακόχλοον / λιπόντες Εὐρώταν / ἣ ῥεύματα σεμνὰ Δίρκας, 399–401). Flowing water is itself an erotic and transitional motif, but here the sacred water is contrasted with the sacred blood spilled in honour of Artemis (ἔνθα κούρα / δία τέγγει / βωμούς καὶ περικίονας / ναοὺς αἶμα βρότειον, 403–6).

After imagining the possible journeys made by Orestes and Pylades, the Chorus draw on Iphigeneia's earlier wish that Helen and Menelaus should be sacrificed in Tauris instead of innocent sailors (355–8) by themselves imagining Helen's death:

εἴθ' εὐχαῖσιν δεσποσύνοις
 Λήδας Ἑλένα φίλα
 παῖς ἐλθοῦσα τύχοι
 Τρωϊάδα λιποῦσα πόλιν, ἔν' ἀμφὶ χαί-
 ταν δρόσον αἵματηρὰν
 ἐλιχθεῖσα λαιμοτόμῳ
 δεσποίνης χειρὶ θάνῃ
 ποιᾶς δοῦσ' ἀντιπάλους. (439–46)

If only by my mistress's prayers Helen, dear daughter of Leda, might happen to leave the city of Troy and come here, so that she might die at my mistress's throat-cutting hand, bloody dew curling round her hair, paying the penalty she owes.

The comparison between Iphigeneia's fate and that of Helen is a natural one to make, arising from the irony that an innocent virgin had to die to regain an adulteress.⁸¹ Within the logic of the play it is also appropriate to invoke Helen, for Iphigeneia sees her as responsible for her own fate at the hands of the Greeks. However, Helen's

⁷⁸ I discuss the myth of Io and its associations with female transition in detail in the following chapter.

⁷⁹ Cf. Kyriakou (2006) on 392–7.

⁸⁰ Cf. Cropp (2000) on 400–2; Kyriakou (2006) on 399–406.

⁸¹ Cf. Eur. *IA* 389–99, 488–94, 1168–70.

murder also achieves a more symbolic function, for the Chorus imagine it in language which evokes the erotic, her hair soaked with 'bloody dew' (ἴν' ἀμφὶ χαί-/ταν δρόσον αἵματηράν / ἐλιχθεῖσα, 442–4). As commentators have noted, the language evokes Clytemnestra's description of her murder of Agamemnon, where she claims to have exulted in the 'dew' of her husband's blood (Aesch. Ag. 1389–92).⁸² Yet the *Agamemnon* passage is itself a perversion of erotic language, using the imagery of fertility to describe death.⁸³ Helen, like Clytemnestra, is a woman whose sexuality makes her a dangerous force and a threat to others. Thus while her punishment is justified in 'logical' terms by her culpability for the Trojan war, the vision of her punishment via the virgin-cult of Artemis also achieves a more symbolic purpose. After this wish for vengeance, however, the Chorus move onto a still more heartfelt wish (ἦδιστ' ἄν, 447): a return to Greece. The girls dwell on the happiness of such a return, envisaging it as celebrated in song (τερπνῶν ὕπνων ἀπόλαυσιν, 454–5) and a source of joy to the community as a whole (κοινὰν χάριν †ᾔλλα†, 455). This rejoicing is shared by both family and city (δόμοις πόλει τε πατρώ-/α, 453–4), suggesting a return to the social ties which the Chorus and Iphigeneia have been deprived of. In prioritizing this joyous return over the punishment of Helen, the Chorus thus suggest the limitations of Artemis' bloodthirsty cult, and hint at a different form of ritual song by which *parthenoi* can assist rather than damage the community.

Similar themes and ideas re-emerge in the second stasimon (1089–1152); the two odes thus form a matching pair of songs which frame the recognition scene. In this ode the Chorus imagine Iphigeneia's return to Greece and lament their own plight as they are unable to join her. This theme is introduced with the striking comparison of the Chorus to the mourning halcyon:

ὄρνις ἃ παρὰ πετρίνας
 πόντου δειράδας ἀλκυῶν
 ἔλεγον οἶτον αἰείδεις,
 εὐξύνετον ξυνετοῖς βοάν,

⁸² See Cropp (2000) and Kyriakou (2006) on 442–5.

⁸³ Cf. Moles (1979); Pulleyn (1997*b*), and see p. 254 below.

ὅτι πόσιν κελαδεῖς ἀεὶ μολπαῖς,
 ἐγὼ σοι παραβάλλομαι
 θρήνους, ἄπτερος ὄρνις,
 ποθοῦς Ἑλλάνων ἀγόρους,
 ποθοῦς Ἄρτεμιν λοχίαν,
 ἃ παρὰ Κύνθιον ὄχθον οἶ-
 κεῖ φοίνικά θ' ἀβροκόμαν
 δάφναν τ' εὐερνέα καὶ
 γλαυκᾶς θαλλὸν ἱερὸν ἐλαί-
 ας, Λατοῦς ὠδῖνι φίλον,
 λίμναν θ' εἰλίσσουσαν ὕδωρ
 κύκλιον, ἔνθα κύκνος μελω-
 δὸς Μούσας θεραπεύει. (1089–1105)

Bird, you who sing of your fate as a lament by the rocky ridges of the sea, a cry which is easy for the wise to understand, halcyon, as they know that you always sing for your husband—I put my dirge beside yours. I am a bird with no wings and I long for the assemblies of Greece, long for Artemis Lochia who dwells beside the Cynthian hill, by the delicate-haired palm and the fine laurel and the sacred shoots of grey olive which helped Leto in her childbirth, and the water circling with curling ripples where the melodious swan serves the Muses.

The ode begins with an address to the halcyon, a mythological sea-bird which was reputed to create a magical calm to lay its eggs on the sea. At first glance, the halcyon seems to be simply part of an escape fantasy: Euripidean choruses frequently express their desire to escape from their situation by wishing for the wings of a bird.⁸⁴ In this case, however, the halcyon is not escaping but lamenting, and the Chorus name it to suggest an analogy between the bird's fate and their own. Throughout the play we have seen repeated use of language evoking the sea and seashore to suggest Tauris' isolation, as well as the ultimate return to Greece (124–5, 218, 236, 253, 393–438, 480). This sea imagery now enhances the comparison to the halcyon, for we have seen Iphigeneia and the Chorus, like the seabird, lamenting their fate on the edge of the ocean. While comparison of young women to birds is common, the choice of halcyon may be a signifi-

⁸⁴ e.g. Eur. *Hipp.* 732–5, *Hel.* 1478–86. The motif can also be expressed in more compressed form within the dramatic action, e.g. *Her.* 1157–8, *Med.* 1296–7. See Padel (1974); Swift (2009).

cant one. The halcyon is said to be singing for her husband (πόσιν κελαδεῖς ἀεὶ μολπαῖς, 1093), suggesting that the myth Euripides has in mind is that Alcyone was turned into a bird as she lamented her drowned husband Ceyx.⁸⁵ Thus the halcyon laments the interruption of her expectations and role as a woman, just as the Chorus lament their isolation from their families and their ritual activities as *parthenoi*. The halcyon's separation from her husband is paralleled by the Chorus's inability to achieve a marriage. Iphigeneia, who has previously been an analogue of the halcyon, is now returning to Greece and thus to a normal life with her male *kurios*, but the other girls are as yet unable to make this transition.

The halcyon may have further parthenaic resonances, for Alcman also uses it of a chorus of *parthenoi*:

οὐ μ' ἔτι, παρσεθνικαὶ μελιγάρνες ἰαρόφωνοι,
 γυνῖα φέρην δύναται· βάλε δὴ βάλε κηρύλος εἶην,
 ὅς δ' ἐπὶ κύματος ἄνθος ἄμ' ἀλκυνόεσσι ποτῆται,
 νηδεὲς ἦτορ ἔχων, ἀλιπόρφυρος ἰαρός ὄρνις. (fr. 26 PMGF)

My limbs can't carry me any longer, young girls with your sweet and melodious voices. Ah now, I wish I could be a *kerylos*, and fly among the halcyons over the flower of the wave, a wonderful bird, purple as the sea, with a fearless heart.

The poet's old age is compared to the freedom of the birds, as he wishes to become a *kerylos*, the male equivalent of the halcyon.⁸⁶ The halcyons represent the *parthenoi*, but the identification is assumed rather than stated in the form of a simile. Thus the poem's phrasing seems to imply that its audience would be familiar with the

⁸⁵ Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 11.410–748; Hyginus, *Fab.* 65. An alternative tradition is that Alcyone and Ceyx were both turned into birds because they called each other Zeus and Hera (cf. Hes. fr. 10d; Apollod. 1.7.–34), but this version would not explain the halcyon's separation from her husband, which parallels the Chorus's separation from their families.

⁸⁶ The *kerylos* is sometimes named as distinct from the halcyon, but always linked to it. For example, the scholiast on *Birds* 299 calls it the halcyon's mate, and Aelian 7.17 refers to a tradition that the halcyons carried old *keryloi* on their backs, as does Antigonius of Carystus, *Mir.* 23 (27), who quotes the Alcman passage in support. See Thompson (1936) under κηρύλος 139–40; Dunbar (1995) on Aristoph. *Birds* 299–300.

connection. It may even be that 'halcyons' was a cult title for the girls, or a reference to a ritual role.⁸⁷

The halcyon's longing for its mate is explicitly paralleled to the Chorus's longing for reintegration into their homeland, and specifically for a different kind of ritual relationship with a new type of Artemis (ποθοῦσ' Ἑλλάνων ἀγόρους, / ποθοῦσ' Ἀρτεμιν λοχίαν, 1096–7). In contrast to the horrific rites at Tauris, the Chorus wish for a gentler version of the goddess: Artemis Lochia. This alludes to the Artemis at Brauron, whose cult combines her responsibility to young girls with that to women giving birth. Whereas the Artemis of the play prevents girls from growing up by trapping them at one point in their development, the new Artemis will instead help them through the various stages of transition. Thus, the Chorus set up a way to relate to the goddess which looks forward to the rituals at Brauron, offering an alternative and positive model for the loss of girlhood. Artemis' shrine is described in language evocative of the eroticized wilderness: a symbol for the loss of chastity in appropriate circumstances. Hence we find flourishing vegetal growth in the palm, laurel, and olive trees. The unusual epithet applied to the palm (ἀβροκόμαν, 1099) is more suggestive of female beauty than natural fertility, evoking as it does the hair of young girls and the delicacy ascribed to them, while the words used of the other young plants (εὐερνέα, 1100, θαλλόν, 1101) evoke the comparison between young humans and saplings which we find elsewhere in Greek poetry to suggest youthful beauty.⁸⁸ The connection of the description with fertility and childbirth is further suggested by the description of Artemis as the 'birthpang of Leto' (Λατοῦς ὠδίνι, 1102), alluding to the future role that the goddess herself will play in childbirth. The image of the flowing water is as we have seen also a common erotic motif: here, however, the connection between the *parthenoi* and the location they describe is enhanced by the phrasing: εἰλίσσουσαν ὕδωρ / κύκλιον (1103–4). The verb εἰλίσσω is more normally used by Euripidean female choruses to describe their own dance: so

⁸⁷ Cf. Bowra (1961) 24, who suggests that the poem was a bird-dance: see Lawler (1942).

⁸⁸ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 17.53, 18.56, 18.437, *Od.* 6.162–9, 14.175; Sapph. fr. 115 V; Theoc. 18.29–30; see also pp. 245–6 below.

commonly in fact that Aristophanes includes it in his parody of Euripidean style in *Frogs* (1314), while the circular movement also reflects choral dancing.⁸⁹ Thus the flowing of the waters and the ritual dance of young girls is implicitly linked, a connection enhanced by the image of the swan singing to the Muses: an image which not only suggests female song but also reflects the similar motif at the end of the surviving section of Alcman fr. 1 *PMGF* (φθέγγεται δ' [ἄρ'] ὦ[τ' ἐπὶ] Ξάνθῳ ῥοαῖσι / κύκνος, 100–1). Just as in the Alcman poem the swan reflects the earlier image of the inauspicious song of the screech-owl and instead offers a more attractive model for female song, here the divinely inspired song of the swan reflects the lament of the halcyon. The Chorus in their current service to Artemis represent the halcyon, isolated and deprived of their rightful role as women. The vision of a kinder goddess they look forward to replaces this with the more positive image of the swan, a version of female song in a healthier relationship with the goddess's shrine, and leading to a fruitful poetic expression.

The middle section of the ode consists of the Chorus's lament for their own fate and their description of Iphigeneia's arrival in Greece. The girls describe their capture after the sack of their city (1106–10) and the service they perform at the shrine of Artemis, whose abduction of Iphigeneia is alluded to in her epithet 'deer-slaying' (ἐλαφοκτόνου, 1113). The image of the deer-killing is mirrored by the statement that Artemis' altars see no slaughter of sheep (βωμούς τ' οὐ μελοθύτας, 1116): while the sheep and the deer appear to contrast, they are in fact linked by Iphigeneia's story and her role in the cult at Tauris. The Chorus then go on to imagine Iphigeneia's journey to Greece and to contrast it with their own fate, poignantly remarking on their separation from their former mistress (†ἐμὲ δ' αὐτοῦ λιποῦσα, 1133). At the end of the ode, the girls wish that they too could follow Iphigeneia, and imagine what their own reintegration into Greece would be like (1138–51). In particular, they imagine themselves performing in a chorus of *parthenoi* at a wedding:

⁸⁹ For εἰλίσσω of Euripidean female choruses, cf. *Her.* 690, *IA* 1055, *IT* 1145, *Phoen.* 235–6: see Csapo (1999–2000) 422.

χοροῖς δ' ἐνσταίην, ὅθι καὶ
 ἔπαρθένος εὐδοκίμων γάμων
 παρὰ πόδ' εἰλίσσουσα φίλας
 ματέρος, ἡλίκων θιάσους
 ἐς ἀμίλλας χαρίτων
 ἄβροπλούτοιο χαίτας εἰς ἔρην
 ὀρνυμένα πολυποίκιλα φάρεα
 καὶ πλοκάμους περιβαλλομένα
 γένυσιν ἐσκίαζον†. (1143–52)

May I take part in the choruses where as a girl at glorious weddings I once whirled around near my dear mother, and in a contest of grace with my age-mates, stirring up competition with my luxurious hair and intricate clothing, I let down my tresses to shade my cheek.

Strictly speaking, this is a hymenaeal chorus rather than a parthenaic one.⁹⁰ However, as we have seen, both types of chorus are connected to the process of female transition that begins with the rituals at Brauron where childhood is left behind and ends with the birth of a new child. The diction of the passage recalls the language of parthenaic choruses in its self-reflective nature, with the emphasis on the girls' costumes, appearance, and ritual gestures. The *parthenoi* dancing are described as competing with each other in beauty (ἐς ἀμίλλας χαρίτων... εἰς ἔρην / ὀρνυμένα, 1147–50) reminiscent of the competitive language used in Alcman fr. 1 *PMGF*, where the girls imagine a beauty contest with Agido in terms of a race (ἀ δὲ δευτέρα πεδ' Ἀγιδῶ τὸ Φεῖδος / ἵππος Ἰβηνῶ Κολαξαῖος δραμήται, 58–9). The girls describe their hair (ἄβροπλούτοιο χαίτα, 1149), which as we have seen is a parthenaic motif. The image of the girl letting down her hair to shade her cheek (πλοκάμους περιβαλλομένα / γένυσιν ἐσκίαζον, 1151–2) is paralleled by Archilochus fr 31 W (ἡ δέ οἱ κόμη / ὤμους κατεσκίαζε), suggesting that it is a common erotic motif. Like Alcman or Pindar's girls, the Chorus also dwell on the

⁹⁰ The phrase *παρθένος εὐδοκίμων γάμων* is awkward because of the odd use of the genitive, and commentators have struggled to explain how it works. Koechly (followed by Kovacs) suggests emending *γάμων* to *δόμων*, in which case the choruses would not be hymenaeal, but the genitive is still difficult. See Kyriakou (2006) 368 for a discussion of the various suggestions.

finery of their accessories (πολυποίκιλα φάρεα, 1150) which they also perceive as helping them in their contest. The presence of the girls' mothers emphasizes their unmarried status, and also foreshadows the future separation from their mother which is a *topos* of the Greek wedding (discussed further in the following chapter).

Just as Iphigeneia is to be reconciled with her own transition to sexual maturity, and will enable other girls to do so too, the chorus also see a role for themselves in the celebration of female sexuality, and set it up in opposition to their own situation. The separation of Iphigeneia from the Chorus is a source of sorrow, yet her transition will in turn allow the other girls to make a similar journey themselves, as promised by Iphigeneia (σωθείσα δ'... σώσω σ' ἐς Ἑλλάδ', 1067–8) and later confirmed by Athene (τάσδε δ' ἐκπέμπειν χθονὸς / Ἑλληνίδας γυναῖκας ἐξεφίεμαι, 1467–8). As various commentators have pointed out, this leads to various logistical problems: firstly the issue of where the women are to go, and secondly the question of how they can be transported there.⁹¹ Within the play, however, Euripides' care to integrate the Chorus into the ending suggests that their return to Greece must fulfil a purpose rather than simply raise questions. Iphigeneia's return has made possible the reintegration of the other women dependent on her, as has the development of a new type of Artemis. Similarly, Iphigeneia's future cultic role represents the symbolic expression of her reintegration into civilized society, which we see operating on a literal level through her return to Greece.⁹² Thus the women's return suggests the completion of the interrupted *rite de passage*, and the new cult which will allow Athenian girls to undergo their ritual separation and return in a less traumatic fashion.

⁹¹ See Cropp (2000) 60; Kovacs (1999).

⁹² I therefore disagree with Wolff (1992) 322–4, who sees the cult reference at the end as 'elliptical and muted' and focuses on the human cost to Iphigeneia. As in most tragic *aitia*, the cult offers a corrective to the mistakes of the play (which this play also offers through its action); we should interpret it in these terms, rather than seeing in it a loss of Iphigeneia's human identity and homecoming.

Artemis

Throughout *IT* we are constantly reminded of Artemis' role behind the bloodthirsty rites at Tauris. While the immediate focus of the plot is Iphigeneia's rescue and her reunion with her brother, the religious meaning of the rites is also one of the play's central concerns, foregrounded by Iphigeneia's own criticisms of the goddess (380–91). Throughout the play Iphigeneia is presented as the servant of the goddess and her representative on earth. We are regularly reminded that the murder of Greek strangers is Artemis' will (35–6, 401–6, 463–6, 585–7, 1186), while Iphigeneia's special status is indicated by the rule that only she may touch the goddess's statue (*θιγέιν γὰρ ὁσίον ἐστ' ἐμοὶ μόνῃ*, 1045). The play's ultimate celebration of the new cult at Brauron thus not only represents the release of Iphigeneia but the transformation of Artemis into a divinity who can help rather than hinder the transition of young girls.

The importance of Artemis to the plot is established early in the play. In the prologue Iphigeneia tells us that it was by the goddess's will that her sacrifice was demanded (17–24). The sacrifice is justified by the claim that Agamemnon had offered the finest fruits of the year to Artemis (*ὅτι γὰρ ἐνιαυτὸς τέκοι / κάλλιστον, ἡὔξω φωσφόρῳ θύσειν θεᾷ*, 20–1), which as we have seen foregrounds the themes of fertility and human sexuality from the very start of the play. Although the motif of a vow with unforeseen consequences is a common one, its use in the Iphigeneia myth is probably Euripides' own invention and serves to highlight the goddess's terrifying nature.⁹³ Whereas in other versions of the myth Agamemnon is said to be punished for some form of *hybris*, here he seems innocent of any moral fault.⁹⁴ In the absence of any clear causality for Artemis' request, the goddess comes to seem arbitrary and bloodthirsty rather than the enforcer of divine justice. Similarly, we are given no explanation as to why Artemis desires the slaughter of the Greek men who come to Tauris and how this barbaric practice can be reconciled with the audience's own

⁹³ See Cropp (2000) on 20–4. For the motif of the incautious vow in other cultures see West (1997) 441–2.

⁹⁴ See Gantz (1993) 582–8; Aretz (1999) 47.

understanding of their religion. The Chorus's address to Artemis in the *parodos* highlights this incongruity by the conventional nature of their prayer:

ὦ παῖ τᾶς Λατοῦς,
 Δίκτυνν' οὐρεΐα,
 πρὸς σὰν αὐλάν, εὐστύλων
 ναῶν χρυσήρεις θριγκούς,
 ὁσίας ὅσιον πόδα παρθένιον
 κληδούχου δούλα πέμπω, (126–31)

Oh child of Leto, Dictynna of the mountains, to your court, to the golden coping of your temple with the fine pillars, I walk in procession on holy virginal foot, the slave of your holy keyholder.

The Chorus address Artemis by her genealogy, cult-title, and special place, all conventional aspects of a Greek prayer. The beauty and solemnity of her temple, however, belie the reality of the shrine's religious practice. While the Chorus describe the gilding on the temple's copings (χρυσήρεις θριγκούς, 129), the phrasing reminds us of Orestes' and Pylades' previous observations that the coping of the altar is bright with blood not gold (ἐξ αἱμάτων γοῦν ξάνθ' ἔχει θριγκώματα, 73) and that under the temple's copings hang the trophies of the murdered victims (θριγκοῖς δ' ὑπ' αὐτοῖς σκῦλ' ὀρφᾶς ἡρτημένα; 74). The Chorus's language of traditional piety therefore sits uneasily with our knowledge of the true nature of the temple and the goddess they serve. The contradictions between the Artemis of the play and traditional belief is further brought out by Iphigeneia's criticisms of the shrine's practices:

τὰ τῆς θεοῦ δὲ μέφομαι σοφίσματα,
 ἥτις βροτῶν μὲν ἦν τις αἴφεται φόνου
 ἢ καὶ λοχείας ἢ νεκροῦ θίγῃ χεροῖν
 βωμῶν ἀπείργει, μυσαρὸν ὡς ἡγουμένη,
 αὐτὴ δὲ θυσίαις ἥδεται βροτοκτόνοις.
 οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως ἔτεκεν ἄν ἡ Διὸς δάμαρ
 Λητώ τοσαύτην ἀμαθίαν. (380–6)

I find fault with the goddess's wisdom, for she debars from her altars any mortal who has been in contact with bloodshed or has touched childbirth or a corpse with his hands, and considers him polluted, yet she herself takes

pleasure in human sacrifice. It is not possible that Zeus' wife Leto could have given birth to such an ignorant creature.

Iphigeneia points out the logical incongruity of a goddess who abides by the usual rules of religious pollution yet herself demands human sacrifice. She then goes on to resolve the contradiction by suggesting that the fault lies not with Artemis but with the Taurians, who attribute their own murderous desires to the gods (386–91), ending with a refutation of the idea that any of the gods could be wicked (*οὐδένα γὰρ οἶμαι δαιμόνων εἶναι κακόν*, 391). Iphigeneia's solution may provide an answer to the problem of Artemis' activities, but nowhere else in the play is it suggested that the Taurians rather than Artemis herself is to blame. Indeed, the play's frequent recollections of Iphigeneia's own sacrifice at Aulis makes it clear that Artemis demands equal barbarity from Greeks and foreigners.⁹⁵ Iphigeneia's morality is that of many other Euripidean characters who criticize traditional views of the gods, yet within the mythological world they inhabit such characters frequently turn out to be misguided.⁹⁶ By raising the issue, Iphigeneia highlights the religious difficulties that Artemis' persona at Tauris involves, foreshadowing the goddess's later conversion into a gentler force. Just as *Prometheus Bound* presents a tyrannical and violent Zeus yet hints at the possibility of a fairer divine order (189–95), so too the horrific nature of Artemis as a Taurian goddess is emphasized as part of the aetiology behind the Brauron cult and its redemptive power.

The reality of Artemis' bloodthirsty nature at Tauris is highlighted by Athene at the end of the play, when she suggests a safer alternative to the rituals. In place of the killings Athene substitutes a mock-death with symbolic blood-letting (1459–61). This ritual is felt to be a compensation for the cessation of the real sacrifice (*τῆς σῆς σφαγῆς ἄποιν'*, 1459) and is said to be necessary to maintain the goddess's honour (*ὁσίας ἑκατι θεά θ' ὅπως τιμὰς ἔχῃ*, 1461), strongly implying Artemis' approval of the past rites. Now, however, a new way is found

⁹⁵ Cf. Hartigan (1986) 121. See also Wolff (1992) 310 on the flaws in Iphigeneia's complaints.

⁹⁶ Cf. Lefkowitz (1989).

to achieve divine favour without harming the community.⁹⁷ Artemis' status at Tauris is linked, through a spurious etymology, to the Athenian cult of Artemis Tauropolia (*Ἀρτεμιν δέ νιν βροτοὶ / τὸ λοιπὸν ὑμνήσουσι Ταυροπόλον θεάν*, 1456–7), once again suggesting the transformation of the goddess from a destructive to a civic force. Athene then goes on to describe Iphigeneia's role in the cult at Brauron:

σε δ' ἀμφὶ σεμνάς, Ἰφигένεια, λείμακας
 Βραυρωνίας δεῖ τῇδε κληδουχεῖν θεᾷ·
 οὐδ' καὶ τεθάψῃ καθανοῦσα, καὶ πέπλων
 ἄγαλμά σοι θήσουσιν εὐπήνους ὑφάς,
 ἃς ἂν γυναῖκες ἐν τόκοις ψυχορραγεῖς
 λίσσῃ ἐν οἴκοις. (1462–7)

Iphigeneia, you must be the key-holder for this goddess at the sacred meadows of Brauron. You will die and be buried there, and they will dedicate an offering of finely woven robes, which women who die in childbirth leave in their homes.

The deictic (*τῇδε*, 1463) underscores the continuity of identity between the Artemis of the Taurian rites and the new cult. This continuity is also suggested by the description of Iphigeneia as key-holder (*κληδουχεῖν*, 1463), picking up on the Chorus's use of the word to describe her role at Tauris (*κληδούχου*, 131). Nevertheless, the sanctuary at Brauron is described as the 'meadows' (*λείμακας*, 1462), drawing on the themes of fertility and barrenness set up earlier in the play to evoke the new cult's engagement with sexual development and fertility. Iphigeneia herself foregrounds the change in Artemis' nature when she prays for the goddess's assistance, calling upon her to become a kindly figure (*εὐμενής*, 1086) rather than the bloodthirsty one she now is. Artemis' transition, like Iphigeneia's, is enacted through her return to Greece after her own isolation in a barbarian land:

⁹⁷ Wolff (1992) 318–19 and Goff (1999) 122 see the continued association between Artemis and sacrifice concerning and see it as undermining the play's apparently positive outcome. I would instead suggest that the hints of sacrifice acknowledge the darker aspects of human transition and their possible dangers, but achieve a way of controlling them and preventing them from acting as dangers to the community.

ἀλλ' εὐμενῆς ἔκβηθι βαρβάρου χθονὸς
 εἰς τὰς Ἀθήνας· καὶ γὰρ ἐνθάδ' οὐ πρόπει
 ναίειν, πάρον σοι πόλιν ἔχειν εὐδαίμονα. (1086–8)

But in a kindly way leave this barbarian land for Athens. It is not right for you to dwell here, when it is possible for you to possess such a fortunate city.

Like her priestess Iphigeneia, Artemis too is saved from occupying a barbaric and socially destructive role, and through Iphigeneia's return to Greece she is offered a new status as a goddess who protects rather than prevents female development.⁹⁸ Some scholars have felt the childbirth dedications to be sinister, emphasizing the failure rather than the completion of female transition.⁹⁹ Yet acknowledging the possibility of failure simply entails an acknowledgement that the difficulties of transition remain. Iphigeneia's own story has already demonstrated the dangers that failed *parthenoi* can pose to their community. The dedication of the clothing acknowledges the possibility of future failed transitions, but incorporates them into cult in a way which contains the negative effects. Thus the parthenaic motifs of *IT* represent not only the civic benefits of well-managed female development but also portray the religious motivations which support and guard transitional ritual.

HELEN

At first glance, *Helen* might appear a much less promising hunting-ground for parthenaic allusions than *IT*. Helen may have real-life connections with Spartan *partheneia* cult, but in the play she is not a young girl but a wife and mother. The myth the play develops is not that of her abduction by Theseus (which was the one connected with her cult aspect); instead, Euripides chooses a deliberately skewed and paradoxical interpretation of the more famous Troy myth, known to

⁹⁸ Artemis' development follows a similar pattern to the Furies in the *Oresteia*, who are also transformed into beneficent goddesses in charge of fertility: for their role in human sexuality cf. Aesch. *Eum.* 959–60 (νεανίδων δ' ἐπηράτων / ἀνδροτυχεῖς βιώτους δότε).

⁹⁹ Cf. Goff (1999) 121.

the audience above all through the *Iliad*. However, even while portraying Helen as an adult woman, Euripides undercuts this presentation, and various scholars have noted the strand of parthenaic imagery that runs through the play.¹⁰⁰ Rather than eloping with Paris in the manner of a sexually mature woman, Helen is snatched away like a young girl. She is treated as a *parthenos* by Theoclymenus: sexually ripe and ready to marry. At times she is referred to as though she were a young girl—she is addressed as *παῖ* at 1356 by the Chorus and as *νεᾶνι* at 1288 by Menelaus.¹⁰¹

In the play, Helen's move back to Greece is repeatedly presented as a re-run of the means by which she arrived in Egypt (abduction). Thus her return home becomes a cleansing of her reputation, a journey backwards through time, and a second attempt at the transition to sexual maturity which went wrong the first time, transitions which once made cannot normally be undone and tried again. So Euripides' version of Helen is potentially an 'Egyptian', deliberately upside-down take on events.¹⁰² However, this also ties in with the play's fantasy element, where wrongs are righted and the suffering and pain of the Trojan War is downplayed.

The marriage theme in the play thus operates on two levels. On the literal level, Helen (a mature and married woman) is inappropriately presented with an alternative marriage, but is fortunately saved and

¹⁰⁰ See Foley (1992); Zweig (1999), who outline several of the *partheneia* motifs in the *Helen*. Rehm (1994) 121–7 also notes transition motifs, though he conceives of it more as a transition to marriage itself than to a marriageable stage of life.

¹⁰¹ Teucer also calls her *γύναι* at 82, 84, 158, and 163. However, this should not be taken as significant, since *γύναι* can be used in tragedy to address women irrespective of their age or marital status. For example, Orestes addresses Iphigeneia as *γύναι* at *IT* 483, 546, but *νεᾶνι* at 619; similarly the Chorus of *parthenoi* in Eur. *Phoen.* are addressed as *γυναικες* at 278 and 991, but *νεάνιδες* at 302. Conversely, *παῖ* and *νεᾶνι* are used overwhelmingly in tragedy to address young and sexually immature women (Soph. *Ant.* 948, *El.* 121, 251, 827, 1230, *OC* 322, 329, 722, 846, 1104; Eur. *El.* 197, 516, *Hel.* 996, 1288 (of Theonoe), *IA* 1402, *IT* 336, 619, *Med.* 1207, *Hec.* 194, 513, *Hclld.* 484, *Phoen.* 154, 1703). Married women addressed in this manner either tend to be childless, and therefore not fully mature (Hermione at Eur. *Andr.* 191), or to be conceived of as the speaker's child (e.g. Phaedra with her childhood Nurse (Eur. *Hipp.* 212, 288, 473, 521), Hecuba to her daughter-in-law (Eur. *Tro.* 697)).

¹⁰² The *locus classicus* for Egypt's epitomizing the reverse of what is normal is Hdt. 2.35. However, it seems to be a common *topos*, and is also found at Soph. *OC* 337; Ath. 7.299f (ascribed to Anaxandrides, fr. 39 K); Diodoros 1.27; Nymphodoros (*FGrHist* 2.380). See How and Wells (1912) on Hdt. 2.35.

reunited with her real husband. However, the marriage theme also operates on an allegorical level, and it is on this level that Helen is presented as a *parthenos* figure.¹⁰³ If one views the play in these terms Helen is in a parthenaic state of seclusion and wilderness; as such she fears and rejects marriage, as *parthenoi* frequently do. Theoclymenus represents an inappropriate model of sexual relations (a threat frequently faced by *parthenoi*) in contrast to the healthy model depicted by her union with Menelaus. Eventually, however, a way is found in which she can enter a marriage joyfully (i.e. with Menelaus), thus enabling her to make the transition to maturity.

Insofar as Helen is presented as a *parthenos* figure, this aspect of her can be conceptually separated from the 'literal' Helen in the play, who is not a *parthenos* at all. Euripides presents Helen as a *parthenos* in order to better explore the themes of sexuality and marriage with which the play engages. This is a technique we find elsewhere: for example, as we saw above, the choruses of (previously married) Trojan captive-women in *Trojan Women* and *Hecuba* are depicted using parthenaic imagery in order to underline their sexual violation. Presenting these women through parthenaic language encourages us to perceive their situation through the filters of female transition, and thus to compare their rape to the legitimate marriage a *parthenos* might expect. Similarly in the *Odyssey*, the married Penelope is portrayed as a *parthenos* and her reunion with Odysseus described through the symbolism of wedding imagery.¹⁰⁴ The audience is in no doubt that Penelope is in fact a middle-aged woman, not a virginal bride, yet the parthenaic imagery adds depth to our interpretation of what is at stake in the reunion between the couple.¹⁰⁵ The figure of Helen thus operates in two interlinked but distinct ways: the

¹⁰³ Cf. Allan (2008) on 244–9: 'it is a basic feature of such mythical parallels as the one made throughout this play between [Helen] and Persephone that they need only to be *partial* in order to be effective'.

¹⁰⁴ e.g. Penelope's parthenaic wish to be swept away before marriage like other unmarried girls (20.61–90); her desire to flirt with the suitors (18.158–303); the contest of the bow as a contest to win a bride (cf. the chariot race of Pelops or the running race for the Danaids); the wedding song Odysseus arranges to coincide with the killings (23.133–51).

¹⁰⁵ As Allan (2008) notes (27–8 and on 1312–14b), Penelope was a model for Euripides' 'new Helen' and thus the similar use of imagery could be understood as deliberate evocation of the *Odyssey* parallels: see also Eisner (1980).

difficulty in interpreting the play comes from the degree to which these two facets of Helen become blurred. By applying parthenaic language to the myth more normally associated with Helen's married status, Euripides points to the mismatch between the allegorical and literal presentations of Helen in the play. By using the 'wrong' Helen myth for the Trojan War story, he can present the apparently unparthenaic Helen in terms suitable for a parthenaic figure (innocent, chaste, abducted).

Once we distinguish the two aspects of Helen's presentation, it becomes easier to reconcile 'logical' objections to her portrayal as a parthenaic figure. For example, Helen *qua* 'real-life' character is behaving entirely reasonably by refusing to marry Theoclymenus, and does not merit criticism. However, in terms of the codes and symbols bound up in the play's allegorical level, the *parthenos* must come to realize that her resistance to marriage is inappropriate and must be abandoned. Theoclymenus himself represents an inappropriate form of marriage (akin to abduction), while Menelaus represents a proper union. This contrast between 'real' and 'symbolic' worlds operates elsewhere in the play. For example, Segal identified a contrast in *Helen* between 'real' and 'ideal' worlds, which heightens the themes of identity, reality, and illusion which are epitomized in the figure of Helen.¹⁰⁶ We should not be surprised at Helen having multiple personae in a play whose main conceit is that the standard version of the Helen myth is a case of mistaken identity. The question of who Helen really is (mortal or goddess? chaste or whore? phantom or flesh?) is of central importance, and is repeatedly explored from a number of angles. Thus, while presenting the middle-aged Helen as a *parthenos* would no doubt be striking, the audience would be unlikely to regard it as bizarre or problematic. Rather, their existing awareness of Helen's links to *partheneia*-cult would assist them in recognizing parthenaic Helen as one among many versions of Helen we encounter during the play.

Pulling together the parthenaic motifs scattered across *Helen* allows us to reassess the meaning of the play and of Helen's role in it. Moreover, reading the play in this light can help us to reach a new

¹⁰⁶ Segal (1971). See also Wright (2005a) 285–325 and Conacher (1998) 74–83 on the themes of reality and illusion in the play.

understanding of one of the passages of the play which has caused the most interpretative difficulty: the ode to Demeter which forms the second stasimon (1301–68).

Opening moves

The opening of the *Helen* sets the play up as an extended metaphor for *partheneia* cult. Imagery of virginity enters the play in its very first line: *Νείλου μὲν αἶδε καλλιπάρθενοι ῥοαί* ('here are the fine virginal streams of the Nile'). The word *καλλιπάρθενοι* is rare, only appearing here and at *Iphigeneia at Aulis* (1574). Both its rarity and its positioning make it extremely emphatic, opening the play with a striking image of female beauty and virginity.¹⁰⁷ Springs and flowing water are part of the imagery associated with virginity and form part of the typical description of the sexualized *locus amoenus* of Greek lyric poetry.¹⁰⁸ They are tied into ritual by the custom that a bride should bathe in water from the sacred spring of her home town on the morning of her wedding day. In this case, the Nile is markedly *not* Helen's home river, and thus emphasizes her isolation from her home. However, Egypt is the place from which she is setting out for a reintegration into her married life, and the starting point of the transition. The springs of the Nile are therefore appropriate to invoke at the start of the day which will culminate in Helen's return to her husband and to Greece.

The prologue also contains other material which emphasizes the theme of female sexual transition. We are told that the daughter of Proteus had her name changed from Eido to Theonoe when she reached sexual maturity (*ἐπεὶ δ' ἐς ἡβην ἦλθεν ὥραϊαν γάμων*, 12). The name change indicates that this time of life represents an

¹⁰⁷ Zweig (1999, 165–6) notes that the word evokes *partheneia*, and triggers generic images of beauty and virginity; cf. Allan (2008) 144–5 *ad loc.* Earlier scholarly interest in *καλλιπάρθενοι* focused on the precise meaning of the word, and whether it simply expresses the purity of the water or evokes river spirits: see Hermann 1831; Paley 1872; Dale 1967; Kannicht 1969.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 14.351; Sapph. fr. 2.5, 96.11 V; Ibyc. fr. 286.2–3 W; for young girls bathing in their local river cf. Alc. fr. 45 V. For sexual language in the prologue see also Kaimio (2002) 109.

important shift in status, but there is further significance in the names chosen. 'Eido' suggests the beauty of the unripe *parthenos*, who is conventionally presented as desirable. However, Theonoe is no ordinary woman, but (as her name makes clear) is blessed with divine knowledge; as such, rather than being allowed to make the normal transition to maturity, she is removed from the ordinary categorization of women according to their sexual status: as she herself says, she has nothing to do with sexuality (*ἡ Κύπρις δέ μοι / ἴλεως μὲν εἴη, συμβέβηκε δ' οὐδαμοῦ*, 1006–7).

Imagery more specifically associated with the *partheneia* enters the play at the same time as the entry of the Chorus, an actual group of young women singing and dancing. Helen sings a lyric interchange with the Chorus (164–251), where she takes on a role similar to Hagesichora or Agido in Alcman fr. 1 *PMGF* or Astymeloisa in fr. 3 *PMGF*. She is part of the chorus but separate from it, and the object of their interest and attention. Helen starts off by addressing the Sirens, whom she describes as *παρθένοι*:

πτεροφόροι νεάνιδες,
παρθένοι Χθονὸς κόραι
Σειρήνες, εἴθ' ἐμοῖς
†γόοις μόλοιτ' ἔχουσαι Λίβυν
λωτὸν ἢ σύριγγας ἢ
φόρμυγγας, αἰλίνοις κακοῖς†
τοῖς ἐμοῖσι σύνοχα δάκρυα,
πάθεισι παθεα, μέλεσι μέλεα,
μουσεῖα θρηνήμα-
σι ξυνωδὰ πέμψαιτε
Φερσέφασσα †φόνια χάριτας†
ἔν' ἐπὶ δάκρυσι παρ' ἐμέθεν ὑπὸ
μέλαθρα νύχια παιᾶνα
νέκυσιν ὀλομένοις λάβη. (167–78)

Winged maidens, virgin daughters of Earth, Sirens, may you come to my mourning, with Libyan lotus flute or pipes or lyres, send me tears to suit my wretched dirge, suffering for suffering, song for song, music of blood to resound with my lament, so that as well as my tears Persephone in her house of night might receive from me in thanks a *paian* for the departed dead.

Helen ponders which Muse to address her song to, and decides on the Sirens. The presence of the Sirens in this passage is normally explained as being related to death, and they are certainly addressed in their chthonic aspect here.¹⁰⁹ Helen's cry to the Sirens is a wish for death, and this is part of what makes them appropriate. However, as we have already seen, the Sirens may also be linked to parthenaic song, where they take on the role of rival singers against whom the chorus measure their own song (Alcman fr. 1.96–9 *PMGF*, and Pindar *Parth.* 94b.13–15 S–M). The Sirens thus represent a dangerous form of femininity, and one which the mortal *parthenoi* need to avoid as they approach the age of marriage.¹¹⁰

The Sirens, like the Chorus, are *parthenoi* and singers. However, whereas the Chorus's singing is part of their transition out of parthenaic status, the Sirens are perpetual *parthenoi* and use their song for sexually destructive purposes—the entrapment and killing of young men. Part of the girls' transition to adulthood is coming to terms with their sexual maturity in a way that is safe, and a source of joy and fertility rather than destruction. The Sirens therefore represent an alternative and threatening model for the *parthenoi*. This model is one which they must try not to fall into, while maintaining suitable respect for the goddesses. Thus, the Sirens fulfil a structural as well as a thematic function in Alcman fr. 1 *PMGF*, connecting the first and second halves of the poem by a theme of sexual misbehaviour and abduction of young girls. Whereas the Hippocoontidae try to snatch away girls to turn them from *parthenoi* to *gunaikes*, the Sirens demonstrate the dangers of remaining *parthenoi* and the destructive aspect of female sexuality. The challenge facing the community is to find a happy medium between these extremes.

The Sirens may possess their own links to female sexual transition, then, and their inclusion in *Helen* highlights this theme in the play. In addition, Sirens are associated with death and are therefore suitable

¹⁰⁹ See Dale (1967) on 165. For Sirens and the chthonic, see Roscher, *GRM* iv. 607–8.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Stehle (1997) 95–9 on Sirens in Pind. *Parth.* 2, who writes (97): 'Marginal figures, eternal virgins, autonomous, enticing speakers, the Sirens are not really auspicious models... for human *parthenoi*. The threat that erotic young women will escape from the system of exchange among men is submerged but not absent.' For a detailed study of Sirens as parthenaic symbols see Bowie (forthcoming).

companions of Persephone, whom Helen mentions at the end of this stanza (175). However, their connection with Persephone is also an association with female development. The Sirens are linked to Persephone's abduction as well as to her life in the underworld, and are sometimes described as playing with her in the meadow when she was seized.¹¹¹ Transition, especially from *parthenos* to *gunē*, is so often described symbolically as death as to be a commonplace.¹¹² And Persephone is the archetypal figure of the young girl whose initiation into sexual maturity is a death and eventual rebirth. The language that Helen uses of herself, therefore, reflects her portrayal in the play as a *parthenos* figure, and is linked to cult and ritual which would have triggered these responses for the audience.

This portrayal is reinforced by the way the Chorus describe Helen's singing in the stanza that immediately follows:

ἐνθεν οἰκτρὸν ὄμαδον ἔκλυον,
 ἄλυρον ἔλεγον, ὃ τι ποτ' ἔλακεν
 <---> αἰάγμα-
 σι στένουσα, Νύμφα τις,
 οἶα Ναῖς ὄρεσι †φύγαδα
 γάμων† ἰεῖσα γοερὸν, ὕπο δὲ
 πέτρινα γύαλα κλαγγαῖσι
 Πανὸς ἀναβοᾷ γάμους. (184–90)

From where I heard a noise, an elegy not fit for the lyre, since she screamed out, groaning with her wails, just as a nymph, a Naiad, lets out over the mountains a mournful cry fleeing marriage, and cries out with screams under the rocky hollows at the rape of Pan.

The Chorus describe Helen's cry as being that of a *νύμφα*—a bride on the verge of marriage. They then compare it to an actual nymph: a naiad being raped by Pan in the wilderness.¹¹³ Again we see the standard imagery of female transition emerging: the *parthenos* in

¹¹¹ Apoll. Rhod. 4.894–7; Ovid, *Met.* 5.552; Claudian, *de Rapt. Pros.* 190.

¹¹² See Rehm (1994); Seaford (1987); Jenkins (1983); Redfield (1982) 188–90, who examine the motif in Greek literature and art.

¹¹³ See Juffras (1993) on how rape imagery is used to construct Helen as an innocent victim.

the wilderness, abducted at her moment of sexual flowering.¹¹⁴ The word γάμοι here is used of what is clearly violent rape, drawing on the ambiguous portrayal of marriage from the girl's point of view which we find so commonly in Greek poetry.¹¹⁵

This imagery is picked up again at 245–9, when Helen describes her actual abduction from Sparta, snatched away by Hermes while gathering roses.¹¹⁶ Abduction during flower-gathering is a standard *topos*, but it is worth noting that Helen's abduction is specifically as a result of Hera's anger. In plot terms this is introduced as a device to explain Helen's presence in Egypt, but involving the goddess of marriage in the abduction is also symbolic.

Fragments of parthenaic allusion are scattered through the rest of the *parodos*, for example in the reference to the Dioscuri at 205–10. In narrative terms it is natural for Helen to refer to her brothers, as she has just learnt about their death. However, in the context of the parthenaic frame which has already been evoked in the mind of the audience, the Dioscuri carry their own particular associations. They are linked to the cult of the Leucippides, and probably mentioned in Alcman fr. 1 *PMGF* (certainly in fr. 2). In particular, the reference to their exercise grounds by the Eurotas (208–10), and the νεανιᾶν πόνος (210), suggests their cult presence on the Dromos, near (and probably linked with) the cult of Helen, where they performed for young boys the same function of transition and initiation as Helen did for girls, and presided over athletic competitions.¹¹⁷

So by the end of the opening choral section, we have been alerted to the significance of *partheneia* in understanding the rest of the play. By triggering the audience's awareness of the genre by allusion to ritual, cult, and imagery, Euripides encourages us to interpret the rest

¹¹⁴ The prototype is Persephone, cf. *HHDem.* 4–18; for women's flower-picking festivals in various parts of the Greek world in honour of the Persephone myth see Strabo 6.1.5.33–8; Pollux 1.37; Paus. 2.35.5, Schol. Aristoph. *Frogs* 344 = Soph. fr. 89. For the motif applied to non-mythological girls, Archil. fr. 196a W.

¹¹⁵ e.g. Sapph. fr. 105b, 107, 114 V; Soph. *Trach.* 144–52. Catull. 61.3, 61.58–9 draws on Greek *topoi*.

¹¹⁶ The motif of abduction and flower-picking is well known and needs no further analysis here: see also p. 271. For an analysis of its use in the *Helen*, see Guépin (1968) 137–42.

¹¹⁷ Calame (1977) 1: 336–7.

of the play in this light. The motif has also been enhanced by Helen's relationship with the Chorus, which as we have seen is configured as reminiscent of the *choragos* figure from parthenaic song. At 375–85, Helen herself expresses envy for women who were turned into wild beasts to escape the fulfilment of their sexual maturity. This is another expression of the wildness of the *parthenos*, actualized through transformation into a wild animal when the 'taming' strategy of sex and marriage does not work. Helen's own desire to avoid marriage has also led to her removal from civilization, as she has taken up residence on a bed of leaves by the tomb of Proteus (798–9), mirroring the seclusion involved in transitional periods. In Helen's case, she has already been physically separated and kept prisoner in a foreign land, removed from her normal social ties. By further removing herself from civilization and assimilating herself to the wilderness, she thus reminds us of the associations of this isolation with transition ritual.

The most striking representation of parthenaic motifs comes in the third stasimon. Here, the Chorus imagine Helen's journey home, and her reintegration into Greece. The scene of her arrival is depicted in terms which strongly evoke parthenaic performance:

ἡ που κόρας ἄν ποταμοῦ
 παρ' οἶδμα Λευκιππίδας ἡ πρὸ ναοῦ
 Παλλάδος ἄν λάβοι
 χρόνῳ ξυνελθοῦσα χοροῖς
 ἡ κώμοις Ὑακίν-
 θου νύχιον ἐς εὐφροσύναν,
 ὃν ἐξαμύλλασάμενος
 †τροχῶ τέρμονι δίσκου†
 ἔκανε Φοῖβος, †τᾷ†Λακαί-
 να γὰ βούθυτον ἀμέραν
 ὁ Διὸς εἶπε σέβειν γόνος·
 μόσχον θ' ἄν †λίποιτ' οἴκοις
 < x - x - ~ ~ - >

ἀς οὕτω πεῦκαι πρὸ γάμων ἔλαμψαν. (1465–78)

She might perhaps find the girls, the Leucippides, beside the swell of the river or in front of the temple of Pallas when at last she joins in the dances and revels for Hyacinthus, in the night-long celebration. Hyacinthus, whom Phoebus killed with the round discus as he competed for the longest

throw—a day for sacrificing oxen in the land of Laconia. The son of Zeus ordered that his offspring be honoured. And the calf which she left at home . . . for whom no wedding torches have blazed yet.

The cult of the Leucippides and dances for Hyacinthus are both stages in the initiation of Spartan girls. Here we find the role and status of the Chorus become ambiguous: as they sing about choruses singing in honour of Hyacinthus, their song in effect becomes a chorus for Hyacinthus. He is associated with sexual awakening because of his links to doomed youth and lovers, and the flower named after him is one of those picked by Persephone at the beginning of the Homeric Hymn (7). Moreover, as we have seen, the Leucippides and their abduction and protection by the Dioscuri may be the focus of the mythological reference at the beginning of the damaged section of Alcman fr. 1 *PMGF*, while the cult of Athene Chalcioikos may also have links to transition (see n. 51 above).

At the end of the stanza we find what most scholars assume is a reference to Hermione (following Murray's emendation) who is described as a *μóσχος* (1466), a typical image to apply to *parthenoi*.¹¹⁸ Helen returns in the capacity of someone present at the transition of other girls, and associated with the ritual surrounding it. As she moves out of her own quasi-parthenaic status, she is in a position to help other girls achieve the same thing. This has already been foreshadowed by her promise to the Chorus that if they help her escape she will help them later (1388–9). Helen's own complicated status in the play, as someone who is somehow both a *parthenos* and a *gunē*, makes her a liminal figure, and therefore suitable to take on these functions.

Like other Euripidean choruses, the Chorus fantasize about turning into birds and flying away with her, in order to achieve a home-coming of their own. Imagining themselves as cranes, the girls describe themselves as flying *Πλειάδας ὑπὸ μέσας / Ὠρίωνα τ' ἐννύχιον* (1489–90). The Pleiades and Orion are of course common astronomical markers for navigation, and their presence is explicable on these grounds alone. Yet as we have seen, the myth of the Pleiades

¹¹⁸ Diggle leaves the line blank. Wilamowitz, Jackson, and Kovacs all include some reference to Hermione in what they supply.

seems to have its own importance in the *rites de passage* of Spartan girls. Here the Pleiades are juxtaposed with Orion, recalling the story of his eternal pursuit of them.¹¹⁹ Like the Chorus, the Pleiades are girls unable to make the transition, and trapped as *parthenoi* in perpetual flight from a male aggressor. These symbolic associations may be subtle, but coming so soon after a detailed description of Spartan cult and ritual, their resonance becomes more pronounced. The final antistrophe calls upon the Dioscuri in their role as σωτήρες to ride across the sea and protect Helen on her journey. Again the Dioscuri are relevant purely in plot-terms as Helen's brothers, as well as in their capacity as protectors of sailors.¹²⁰ However, their evocation as σωτήρε τὰς Ἑλένας (1500) recalls the myth that they saved Helen after her abduction by Theseus: the story usually connected with her role in parthenaic cult.¹²¹ The ode ends with a repudiation of the Troy myth and the δύσκλεια (ill repute) Helen has incurred as a result, and it is the Dioscuri who are asked to bring about this cleansing of Helen's reputation (1506–11). Thus at the moment of Helen's return to Greece, we are told of the realignment of the stories surrounding her, such that in the future she will be known for her role in Spartan cult (as described earlier in the ode) rather than as a guilty adulteress.

Anger to joy: the Demeter ode

The Demeter ode is placed at a turning point in the play. We have just watched the crucial scene where Helen and Menelaus persuade the Egyptian king Theoclymenus to give them a ship. The escape plan has been put into action, but its success is far from guaranteed. The Chorus's response to this moment of suspense is strange: they sing an ode telling the story of Demeter's search for Persephone, and furthermore couched in the language of the orgiastic cult of the Great Mother.

¹¹⁹ Padel (1974) 237.

¹²⁰ Cf. Alcaeus fr. 34 V; Eur. *El.* 992–3, 1348, *Or.* 1637; *HH* 33 (to the Dioscuri).

¹²¹ See Gantz (1993) 288–91 for the myth in art and literature.

At first glance, the Demeter ode seems deliberately irrelevant. The ode makes no overt reference to events on-stage; the only link to Helen's story comes in the final stanza. The text is corrupt, but someone (presumably Helen) is said to have incurred Demeter's wrath by not honouring her rites (μῆνιν δ' ἔχεις μεγάλας / Ματρός, ὦ παῖ, θυσίας / οὐ σεβίζουσα θεᾶς, 1355–7). This statement itself is doubly perplexing, as we are given no indication as to how or why, and it does not tie in with anything we know of the Helen myth. The choice of myth is also surprising: there seems no reason to use Demeter's story as a paradigm for Helen's, and no reason to link Demeter's search to Helen's escape.

Scholars traditionally explained away the ode as a piece of lyric poetry in its own right.¹²² It was seen as typical of Euripides and of the increasing irrelevance of choral lyric to the plots of late fifth-century drama.¹²³ Even those who could not accept that Euripides would insert a mere *embolimon* here still rejected the idea that there is any significance to the Demeter myth.¹²⁴ Following Guépin's theory

¹²² e.g. Dale (1967) on 1301–68 comments on the 'complete irrelevance of this motif to all the rest of the play', and suggests that the linking of the myth to the action of the play in the corrupt section must have been 'tenuous'. She concludes that 'the ode is in fact introduced for its own sake'. Paley (1872) on 1301 describes it as 'liable to the charge of being unconnected with the subject of the play'. Jerram (1882) and Pearson (1903) agree, as does Decharme (1906) 314–15. Michie and Leach (1981) go as far as suggesting that Euripides might have 'inserted an ode from his reservoir' (see introd. 12–13 and on 1391). Kannicht (1969) accepts the ode as being relevant to the play, but on exactly how, comments 'the problem of interpreting it has still not been completely resolved' ('ist allerdings das Problem der Deutung noch nicht restlos gelöst', 334), and suggests that the warning to Helen is not exactly aimed at the Helen of the play, but used to stand in for a general pattern of human behaviour regarding orgiastic Mysteries. See Kannicht (1969) 327–8 and Allan (2008) 294–5 for an overview of earlier interpretations of the ode.

¹²³ Aristotle (*Poetics* 18.7) discusses the practice of introducing choral interludes which were not connected to the subject of the play any more than to any other tragedy (which he calls *embolima*). He claims that this practice was introduced by Agathon, and that it was common among the later poets. See Golann (1945) 31–3 for an analysis of the passage, and discussion of the *Helen* in this context. Decharme (1906) 314–15 regards the Demeter ode as 'an *embolimon* in the true sense of the word'.

¹²⁴ Golann (1945) suggests that the myth is not that of Demeter but of Helen and Nemesis, although his emphasis on the significance of the abduction motif nevertheless ties in with my argument here. Less plausibly, Verrall (1905) 43–133 takes the content of the ode to suggest that the play was not composed for the Dionysia but for

of 'anodos dramas', however, recent commentators have read more into the significance of the myth: the Demeter ode comes to make sense as an allusion to the model on which Helen's story is based, and Persephone becomes a mythological prototype rather than a baroque ornament.¹²⁵

However, the significance of the ode goes rather deeper than this; it is structurally linked to Euripides' telling of the myth and its symbolism. The Demeter ode, and the 'anodos drama' model on which it is based, is linked to a broader way in which Helen is construed as Persephone: her status as a parthenaic figure. Having explored the importance of parthenaic motifs and imagery in the play, we are perhaps in a better position to answer the question which has caused so much confusion: how did Helen anger Demeter?

The Demeter ode comes at the moment when Helen is released from Egypt and reunited with her husband. It is also the moment in which she is pretending to put aside her parthenaic objections to sexuality, and to consent to marry Theoclymenus.¹²⁶ It is therefore a turning point in the play, not only in plot terms but in terms of Helen's own status as a symbolic *parthenos*. On analysis, parthenaic imagery runs through the Demeter ode. When we reinterpret the ode in the light of the clues we have been given earlier in the play, we can see that the Persephone myth does not just reflect the overall story-arc of the play, but is central to the religious and symbolic function of Helen.¹²⁷

This link has already been set up at the start of the play, when Helen appeals to the Sirens as companions of Persephone (167–78). In *partheneia*, like most poetic genres, a mythological section seems common, and the story of Persephone is an obvious one to set up as a model.¹²⁸ In addition, however, the reference to Persephone crystal-

a private performance at the Thesmophoria (an interpretation which has been generally dismissed).

¹²⁵ Cf. also Pippin (1960) 156: 'the Demeter-Persephone motif offers a promise at the outset that Helen will not be held captive forever'.

¹²⁶ Robinson (1979) 164–6 discusses the parallelism between Theoclymenus' attempt to marry Helen and Hades' abduction of Persephone.

¹²⁷ Cf. Allan (2008) 295 and on 1355–7.

¹²⁸ Cf. Alc. fr. 1.1–36 *PMGF*, where scholars have argued that the myth given is a parthenaic prototype (the rape of the Leucippides and their protection by the

lizes Helen's own role. Persephone is a model of female transition for Helen to follow, and Helen is herself a model for other women. Within the world of the play, her escape to Greece offers hope that the Chorus might also be able to follow. In the world of the audience, Helen is no longer a mortal woman who needs to manage her own transition but a divinity responsible for the transitions of others.

Euripides' telling of the story concentrates on its allegorical function. Persephone's abduction is set up to be symbolic of the ending of virginity. She is taken from a group of other *parthenoi* dancing in a chorus (τὰν ἀρπασθείσαν κυκλίων / χορῶν ἔξω παρθενίων, 1312–13), and the goddesses who are with her and who help Demeter in her search are perpetual virgins: Artemis and Athene (ἃ μὲν τόξοις Ἄρτεμις, ἃ δ' / ἔγχει Γοργώπις πάνοπλος, 1315–16).¹²⁹ The ode does not describe what happens to Persephone in the underworld or her release. Instead it focuses upon Demeter's response to the rape, her grief and eventual reconciliation. This motif can be interpreted as symbolizing a reconciliation to sexuality.

The allegorical aspects of the ode are further emphasized by Demeter's response to Persephone's abduction:

δρομαῖον δ' ὅτε πολυπλάνη-
τον μάτηρ ἔπαυσε πόνον
ματεύουσα †πόνους†
θυγατρὸς ἀρπαγὰς δολίους,
χιονοθρέμμονάς τ' ἐπέρας'
Ἰδαιῶν Νυμφῶν σκοπιὰς
ρίπτει τ' ἐν πένθει
πέτρινα κατὰ δρία πολυνιφέα.
βροτοῖσι δ' ἄχλοα πεδία γᾶς
<x – x – ~ ~ – >
οὐ καρπίζουσ' ἀρότοις,
λαῶν δὲ φθείρει γενεάν,

Dioscuri). For the link between the myth and the performance context see Stehle (1997) 30–5; Robbins (1994).

¹²⁹ *HHDem.* 424 describes Persephone being in the company of Artemis and Athene when she was abducted (though the line may be spurious). The same version is found in Claudian, *de Rapt. Pros.* 2.205–8. See Dale (1967) and Allan (2008) on 1314–16.

ποίμναις δ' οὐχ ἶει θαλερὰς
 βοσκὰς εὐφύλλων ἐλίκων·
 πόλεων δ' ἀπέλειπε βίος,
 οὐδ' ἦσαν θεῶν θυσίαι,
 βωμοῖς δ' ἄφλεκτοι πελανοί·
 παγὰς δ' ἀμπαύει δροσερὰς
 λευκῶν ἐκβάλλειν ὑδάτων
 πένθει παιδὸς ἀλάστω. (1319–37)

When the mother stopped her swift wandering toil, searching for the treacherous abduction of her daughter, she went over the snow-clad crags of the nymphs of Ida. In grief she hurled herself among the rocky thickets covered in snow, and by not making the barren fields of the earth fertile with crops for mortals, she destroyed the race of men. She did not send forth the fresh pasture of leafy tendrils for the herd, and life began to leave the cities. There were no sacrifices for the gods. The offerings were unburnt on the altars. She made the dewy streams of pale water stop flowing in vengeful grief for her child.

Demeter removes herself to the infertile parts of the world: rocky and snow-covered. She puts a stop to the natural fertility of the earth, refusing to produce crops for men to eat or animals to graze on. Her drying up of the 'dewy' springs (παγὰς δ' ἀμπαύει δροσερὰς / λευκῶν ἐκβάλλειν ὑδάτων, 1335–6) is part of this destruction of fertility but also carries symbolic overtones. Flowing water and dew are common motifs in descriptions of the *locus amoenus* which is used to stand for sexuality, and as we have seen above, springs have their own role to play in female transition.¹³⁰

Demeter's release from her rage comes about via the sexually provocative music and dance of the East.¹³¹

ἐπεὶ δ' ἔπαυσ' εἰλαπίνας
 θεοῖς βροτείῳ τε γένει,
 Ζεὺς μελίσσων στυγίους
 Ματρὸς ὀργὰς ἐνέπει·
 Βᾶτε, σεμναὶ Χάριτες,
 ἦτε, τὰν περὶ παρθένῳ

¹³⁰ For water in the *locus amoenus*, Hom. *Il.* 14.351; Sapph. fr. 2.5, 96.11 V; Ibyc. fr. 286.2–3 W.

¹³¹ Zweig (1999) 169. Also see Guépin (1968) 125–7.

Δηὼ θυμωσαμένην
 †λύπαν ἐξαλλάξατ'† ἀλαλῆ
 Μοῦσαι θ' ὕμνοισι χορῶν.
 χαλκοῦ δ' αὐδὰν χθονίαν
 τύπανά τ' ἔλαβε βυρσοτενῇ
 καλλίστα τότε πρῶτα μακά-
 ρων Κύπρις· γέλασεν δὲ θεὰ
 δέξατό τ' ἐς χέρας
 βαρύβρομον αὐλὸν
 τερφθεῖσ' ἀλαλαγμῶ. (1337–52)

When she put a stop to feasts for gods and for the race of mortals, Zeus spoke and appeased the Mother's gloomy anger. 'Go, holy Graces, go, with a cry change the grief for the girl from Demeter's angry heart, and you, Muses, with choral songs.' Kypris, most beautiful of the blessed gods, was the first to take the earthy voice of bronze and the drum with its stretched skin. The goddess smiled, and took the resounding *aulos* into her hands, delighted at its sound.

It is the Graces, goddesses associated with marriage, whom Zeus commands to console Demeter.¹³² It is then Aphrodite who begins the music. The combination of *krotala*, drums, and the *alalagmos* suggest the rites of the Great Mother, known elsewhere as Cybele or Rhea, and associated with orgiastic rituals.¹³³ However, the story is clearly that of Demeter: Cybele never had a daughter who was abducted. Demeter's identity here is thus mixed with that of Cybele, which allows her to take on the same functions of sexuality and procreation.¹³⁴

These functions are to an extent implicit in Demeter's status as goddess of natural fertility and growth, and so on a religious level the shift is an easy one to make.¹³⁵ However, it is also poetically significant as it suggests the sexual aspect of Demeter in her new state, without needing to stress it explicitly. The musical theme takes on a

¹³² Cf. schol. Eur. *Hipp.* 1147. Bushala (1969) 25 n. 7 gives an extensive list of evidence for the association between the Charites and love and marriage in ancient literature.

¹³³ *HH* 14 (to the Mother of the gods); Nilsson (1967) I. 687–8.

¹³⁴ Kannicht (1969) 328–33 gives an extensive account of the religious rituals suggested by the ode, and how to reconcile them. Also see Dale (1967), introduction to the ode, and on 1301 and 1341; Maas (1933) 2.3; Allan (2008) 294–5.

¹³⁵ Cf. Detienne (1977) xv.

resonance which is self-reflexive: in the context of the ode, it highlights the blurring of Demeter and Cybele's identities and the sexualized nature of the rites. However, the fact that the ode itself is a musical performance also indicates the relevance of its message. The performance of the ode, as we are told at the end, is happening because Demeter has let go her anger at Helen. The music of the ode is not itself the reason that Demeter is placated but we are told of a previous occasion on which the goddess was soothed by music, and music is once again used at a time when the goddess has put aside her anger.

Although we know from the myth that Persephone is eventually returned to Demeter, her restoration is only partial, and her fate is suggestive of the transition out of girlhood to sexual maturity, which cannot be undone.¹³⁶ Nevertheless in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, Demeter rejects the gods' gifts and gives up her anger only when reunited with her daughter (325–30). Here, however, Demeter's release from her rage is nothing to do with the return of Persephone—indeed there is no suggestion in the ode that Persephone will ever be returned. This is particularly striking given that Helen *is* being returned to her own daughter, so we might expect a focus on the reconciliation. However, Helen's return to her daughter is symbolic of the joyous outcome of her reconciliation to sexuality and the figurative shift in status that this entails. Helen has now returned to her rightful status as a *gunē*, and will oversee the transitions of other *parthenoi*, as we will go on to see in the third stasimon. Conversely, Persephone as a *parthenos* figure is lost forever. Deleting the return motif emphasizes the permanence of the transition into sexual maturity. The consoling of Demeter is not just a temporary release to demonstrate the distracting power of the rites even in a time of emotional frenzy.¹³⁷ The ode finishes on an upbeat note: there is no suggestion that Demeter will return to her anger when the musical performance stops. In effect, Demeter is reconciled to sexuality and thus to the loss of her virgin daughter. Presumably it is this

¹³⁶ See Foley (1994) 118–37.

¹³⁷ Pace Dale (1967) 150, who suggests that the point of the ode is 'the potency of the rites . . . which could bring relief and distraction even in the frenzy of that search'.

motif that lies behind the blurring of her identity with that of the Mother.¹³⁸

The final stanza provides the only explicit link to the play, although as we have seen, a connection is already implicit in the themes running throughout it:

†ὦν οὐ θέμις οὔθ' ὅσια
ἐπύρωσας ἐν θαλάμοις,†
μῆνιν δ' ἔχεις μεγάλας
Ματρός, ὦ παῖ, θυσίας
οὐ σεβίζουσα θεᾶς.
μέγα τοι δύναται νεβρῶν
παμποίκιλοι στολίδες
κισσοῦ τε στεφθεῖσα χλόα (1360)

νάρθηκας εἰς ἱερὸς
ρόμβου θ' εἰλισσομένα
κύκλιος ἔνοσις αἰθερία
βακχεύουσά τ' ἔθειρα Βρομί-
ω καὶ παννυχίδες θεᾶς. (1365)

†εὖ δέ νιν ἄμασιν
ὑπέρβαλε σελάνα
μορφᾷ μόνον ἡὔχεις.† (1353–68)

In the chambers, you burned offerings which were not right or holy, and you incurred the anger of the Great Mother, child, by not honouring the sacrifices of the goddess. Great is the power of the dappled fawn-skin robe, and the greenery of ivy that crowns the holy thyrsus. The circular curling shake of the bull-roarer on high, the hair streaming out for Bromios, the all-night festivals of the goddess <when the moon overshoots the days. You gloried in your beauty alone.>

Helen is said to have incurred Demeter's wrath by not honouring her rites (μῆνιν δ' ἔχεις μεγάλας / Ματρός, ὦ παῖ, θυσίας / οὐ σεβίζουσα θεᾶς, 1355–7). This is the passage which is usually felt to

¹³⁸ Kaimio (2002) 111–12 also notes the theme of sexual union which lies behind the Demeter ode, though she connects this with her belief that Helen and Menelaus are having intercourse inside the house while the Chorus sing the ode (cf. also Dimock (1977) 19). While I remain unconvinced on this point, it is true (as Kaimio also notes) that the bathing of Menelaus resembles a nuptial bath (1296–1300), and so the symbolism of sexual union between the couple is present even if we are not meant to infer its reality.

be confusing, and commentators have searched far and wide to come up with a plausible way in which Helen could be said to have angered Demeter.¹³⁹ However, this passage is in fact meant to explain the relevance of the myth and link it to Helen's own status as represented in the play. Helen, as a figure of parthenaic allegory has herself been refusing to enter sexual maturity and thus rejecting the moral of the Demeter myth.

Helen is said to rely on her beauty (*μορφῇ μόνον ἡῤῥεῖς*†, 1368)—a characteristic normally applied to *parthenoi*, and apparently set in contrast with the rites of sexually mature Demeter. Alcman's *parthenoi*, by contrast, explicitly mention that their beauty will not be able to protect them from the divine threat to the transition they face, and instead suggest the protection offered by their chorus leader (fr. 1.64–77 *PMGF*). In fact, the Helen we have seen in the play, far from rejoicing in her beauty, wishes it away (260–5). So the beauty motif is not meant to be literally transferable to the characterization of Helen, any more than we are meant to believe that she is literally a *parthenos*. Rather, it is symbolic of the way Helen is construed as a *parthenos* to achieve the thematic ends of the play, and it is in this light we are meant to accept the statement that she gloried in her beauty.

Helen's return to Greece, paralleling Demeter's release from her grief, suggests her own transition to sexual maturity, and thus her reconciliation with the goddess. Demeter's previous anger came about because of her own rejection of sexuality, and was undone by her transformation into a goddess whose function is to uphold procreation and sexuality. In her new Cybele-like form, her anger is turned in the other direction—against those who are rejecting the lesson she has learnt and the religious ritual she has been granted as a

¹³⁹ Thus for example Pearson (1903) 170 suggests that the motif applies to Persephone and not to Helen; Dale (1967) on 1301–68 sees the motif as irrelevant; Kannicht (1969) 2. 334 suggests that the Helen who is the subject of the Chorus's warning is a metaphor for how humans relate to the divine; Podlecki (1970) 412 doubts that Helen could have angered the goddess. Robinson (1979) 170 comes closer to my position by connecting Demeter's anger with the ritual song described in the third stasimon, but does not discuss the parthenaic connotations of these rites. Closest to my argument is Allan (2008) on 1355–7, who also sees the warning as relevant to Helen's parthenaic status.

compensation for the loss of her daughter. Helen's departure from Egypt marks the end of her quasi-parthenaic status: her apparent acceptance of marriage to Theoclymenus, and her actual resumption of marriage to Menelaus.

Helen's presentation in the play thus far has been alien to her standard presentation in myth: rather than representing the power of female sexuality, she becomes chaste and virtuous. The Helen of the play so far is not the kind of Helen who we could imagine participating in the sexualized *παννυχίδες* of the type described at the end of the ode (1365). Helen's reunion with Menelaus, then, marks a resumption of normal sexual activities. Effectively, the ode hints that Euripides' presentation of Helen up till now, while whitewashing her name, has gone too far in effacing her sexuality, which now needs to be restored. The Demeter ode comes at the moment of Helen's release, thus aligning Helen's return to Greece and the cleansing of her reputation with the prototype of female transition. It represents an acceptance that the arrival of female sexuality, though problematic, can be managed in a way that is constructive and a source of joy.

Conclusion

At the core of *IT* and *Helen* lie the foundation stories of cults related to the *rites de passage* of young girls, and it has long been argued that these stories shape the structure of the plays. By sustained allusion to the musical culture which surrounds these rituals, Euripides alerts his audience to the relevance of these themes. The plays depict an aetiology for *partheneia* cult and song, but they are also an expression of it. Tapping into the traditions surrounding these themes allows the audience to make these associations, as the religious and dramatic functions intermesh. The play becomes simultaneously an escapist fantasy about a mythological heroine, an allusion to her real-life cult functions, and an enactment of that cult. All these meanings are achieved through several layers of mimesis, for the performance is carried out by a chorus of men for whom all three roles are fictitious.

Both plays draw on the themes of *partheneia* to present a positive model. They present the problems and concerns associated with

female transition, actualized in the figure of an individual woman, for whom the dangers and difficulties involved in this transition are real ones. But this woman, who is presented as an ordinary mortal during the play, is known to the audience as a deity who herself manages and controls the transitions of contemporary women. Iphigeneia and Helen's own transitions not only provide an explanation of their role in later cult, but also offer hope that other women will be able to follow their example.

Within this broad model, the plays use the details of parthenaic ritual to create these resonances, drawing on cultic references such as Sirens and halcyons, or *topoi* such as the 'marriage to death', or 'flower-picking' motifs. The plays move between specific allusion to the details of real-life cult practice, and general references to the imagery and motifs which are found associated with female transition across Greece. Thus, the audience is encouraged to connect what they see on-stage to their knowledge of actual religious practice, and to accept the play as an aetiology for the rituals. The generalized nature of much of the imagery, however, encourages them to understand the play at an allegorical rather than a literal level. Moreover, by the use of these general references, the plays help their Athenian audience to connect the tradition of female choral lyric to their own understanding of female transition.

Our observations on *paian* and *epinikion* highlighted the way that tragedy exploits the mismatch between the assumptions of the lyric genre and the action of the play. In *IT* and *Helen* we see a similar effect created by the means of positive rather than negative paradigms. Thus the generic models affirm and strengthen the positive message that the play presents. In both plays the action moves from suffering to stability, rather than vice versa.¹⁴⁰ The norms of *partheneia* are used to validate this movement, and to confirm for the audience that the lessons learned in the play are correct ones. Both Iphigeneia and Helen begin the plays as women whose sexuality has not been properly managed, with problematic results. Over the

¹⁴⁰ Tragedies of this nature have often been felt to be atypical or to belong to a different subcategory of the genre, but in fact may have been common: see Allan (2008) 66–72; Swift (2008) ch. 6.

course of the play they are brought to accept a mode of sexuality which will enrich the community rather than threatening it. The use of *partheneia* encourages the audience to generalize the lesson, and to see on-stage an aetiology explaining how they should handle these issues in their own lives.

Hymenaios

In dealing with *hymenaios* we face similar issues to those we faced with *partheneia*, for both genres form part of a *rite de passage* dealing with issues of sexuality and sexual maturity. As with *partheneia*, we have frustratingly little surviving poetry, and our picture of the genre is often dependent on sources widely separated in time and space. However, our attempts to understand *hymenaios* are greatly assisted by the genre's function and performance context. Unlike *paian* or *partheneia*, the purpose and connotations of *hymenaios* are ones which modern readers can easily understand, and which remain intuitively accessible to us. Moreover, our understanding of the Greek wedding and its rituals is solid, and we can draw on evidence both from literary texts and from archaeological material. Thus despite the paucity of genuine *hymenaios*, we are nevertheless able to construct a picture of the genre and its associations against which we can test hymenaeal allusions in tragedy.

THE GENRE

At first sight, identifying *hymenaios* appears straightforward, for the singing of choral songs to celebrate a marriage is widely attested and dates back to our earliest texts. The description of the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad* includes a scene from a wedding celebration, and the festivities involve the performance of a *hymenaios* (πολὺς δ' ὑμέναιος ὁρώρει, 18.493). We also have surviving fragments of wedding songs from Sappho (discussed below), while Attic *lebētes*

gamikoi sometimes depict the bride holding a musical instrument, hinting at the songs which formed part of the marriage ritual.¹ Wedding songs are referred to in a range of literary texts, and ancient writers use the wedding song to represent the wedding ceremony as a whole or the institution of marriage, which suggests that songs were a deeply ingrained part of wedding ritual.²

In defining *hymenaios* as a specific genre, however, we face more issues. Songs were performed at various points during the wedding ritual: at the marriage feast, during the procession to the groom's house, outside the bridal house to celebrate the consummation of the marriage, and the following morning, to wake up the newly-weds.³ The traditional approach was to separate out these categories of song and to use distinct terminology: *hymenaios* to refer to the songs sung at the wedding procession; *epithalamion* of those sung outside the bride's chamber.⁴ Like most neat categorizations of ancient genre, however, this begins to break down as soon as we examine archaic and classical texts in detail. The word *ἐπιθαλάμιον* is not used in surviving pre-Hellenistic literature and it therefore seems doubtful that it was conceptualized as a separate genre from *hymenaios*.⁵ Conversely, the word *ὑμέναιος* is used more broadly than simply of the wedding procession. To take one example, in Pindar's *Pythian* 3.17 the word *ὑμέναιος* represents marriage ritual in general but the point in the ceremony most clearly suggested by the poem is the singing outside the house rather than the procession (*ἄλικες / οἶα παρθένοι φιλέουσιν ἑταῖραι / ἑσπερίαις ὑποκουρίζεσθ' αἰοδαῖς*, 'things such as maidens her own age love to murmur in their evening songs',

¹ See Oakley and Sinos (1993) figs. 36–8.

² For example, in *Orestes*, Pylades expresses his hope that his marriage to Electra will go ahead by hoping that she will come to Phocis celebrated by *hymenaiōi* (*Φωκέων δ' ἔλθοι πόλιν / καλοῖσιν ὑμεναίοισιν ἄξιουμένη*, Eur. *Or.* 1209–10). Similarly, Antigone laments the lack of a song for her wedding (*οὐθ' ὑμεναίων / ἔγκληρον*, Soph. *Ant.* 813–14).

³ For songs at the feast, see Lucian, *Symp.* 41; Aristox. 125. For singing at the bridal chamber, see Pind. *Pyth.* 3.16–19; Theoc. 18; Longus 4.40; Himer. *Or.* 1.1, and for the return the following day, see Alciph. 3.13. Oakley and Sinos (1993) 23–38, and Rehm (1994) 14–18, give an outline of the wedding ritual and the occasions for musical performance.

⁴ Cf. LSJ s.v. *ὑμέναιος*, *ἐπιθαλάμιος*.

⁵ Cf. Contiades-Tsitsoni (1990) 31.

17–19). Theocritus 18, whose title is recorded as an *epithalamion* for Helen, describes the singing outside the bridal house, but the song that the girls sing is called a *hymenaios* (ὑπὸ δ' ἴαχε δῶμ' ὑμεναίῳ, 8).⁶ Even later sources are not consistent in their use of terminology: for example, Plutarch uses the term ὑμέναιος to cover the songs sung at the wedding feast (*Quaest. Conv.* 666f–67a).

It is fair to say that the term ὑμέναιος nevertheless retains a particular association with the wedding procession. However, this reflects more about the Greeks' perception of their marriage rituals than their categorization of musical genres. The procession is the public aspect of the wedding, where the bridal couple and their relatives are on display to the whole community, and it therefore has particular importance: it is the moment most commonly depicted on vases as well as being a standard way of referring to a wedding in a literary text. The procession is only one element of wedding ritual but the significance it takes on is a broader one, for it is used to symbolize the ceremony as a whole and so to stand for the institution of marriage.⁷ Thus the connection between the word ὑμέναιος and the procession may not indicate a subcategory of song defined by its performance context, but rather be a way of summing up the wedding as a whole. Given the breadth of the way ὑμέναιος is used, and the absence of any classical evidence for alternative categories of wedding song, it seems most likely that ὑμέναιος was a general term for music performed at a wedding. A classical Greek would probably have regarded wedding songs as belonging to a single broad grouping, even if he was aware of subdivisions in style and content according to the moment in the ritual at which the song took place. In this chapter I will therefore use the term *hymenaios* as a catch-all term to refer to any kind of wedding song.⁸

⁶ Similarly, the scholiast on Theoc. 18 *arg.* divides *epithalamia* into further sub-categories according to when the songs were sung: *κατακοιμητικά* in the evening; *διεγερτικά* the following morning. Yet this precise definition is not reflected in the language of the song itself.

⁷ Thus in the *Iliad* example (18.493) it is the procession which symbolizes marriage, which in turn symbolizes peace.

⁸ Cf. Muth (1954) 43: '*Hymenaios* . . . verhält sich zu *Epithalamion* wie das logische Genus zur Species'.

An advantage of dealing with *hymenaios* is that we have a clear idea of the performance context and function, compared to other lyric genres. We know a reasonable amount about the Greek wedding and the details of its rituals; on a more general level we know the functions that weddings fill in anthropological terms. Compared to *paian* or *epinikion*, this is an easy genre for a modern reader to understand. Set against this, however, is the major disadvantage that very few *hymenaios* survive, and those that do are extremely fragmentary. Nevertheless, it is possible from these fragments, and from our knowledge of Greek wedding ritual, to make some generalizations about what material was suitable for inclusion in a wedding song. Attempting to assign songs (and hence *topoi* or themes) to particular stages in the ritual is difficult without clear internal evidence from the texts themselves, which we normally lack, so, again, I will not attempt to subdivide.⁹

The only authentic and certain examples of Greek *hymenaios* come from Sappho.¹⁰ While the performance context of much of Sappho's poetry is disputed, certain poems are clearly rooted in the context of a wedding.¹¹ These pieces are short and extremely fragmentary, but nevertheless provide us with valuable evidence. We also possess poems which are not genuine *hymenaios* but which purport to be wedding songs or which draw heavily on hymenaeal models, for example, Theocritus 18 contains the song sung outside the bridal chamber at Helen's wedding to Menelaus, while Catullus 62 is a poem celebrating an unspecified wedding based on Greek models. Tragedy and comedy often imitate or parody the conventions of wedding songs, and this too gives us evidence about them. There are of course problems in building a case derived from sources from widely differing time periods. However, wedding rituals in many cultures tend to be conservative in nature, and the pressure to remain conventional would have been greater than any pressures to innovate.

⁹ Cf. Webster (1970) 74.

¹⁰ See Contiades-Tsitsoni (1990) 46–63 for a discussion of Alcman as a hymenaeal poet and whether we have any surviving hymenaeal fragments.

¹¹ Most clearly fr. 103b, 107, 108, 109, 110a, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117 V, and probably also 104ab, 105ac V.

When we look at Greek accounts of wedding songs, we see a striking level of continuity: for example Lucian, writing in the second century AD, parodies features of the wedding song which we are familiar with from Sappho and from other hymenaeal sources (*Symp.* 41). Later sources therefore seem to be drawing on a shared awareness of a hymenaeal tradition, and so, as long as we are careful, it seems possible to accumulate a picture of the Greek wedding song.

The most obvious identifying feature is the ritual refrain to Hymen, which, like the *paian*-refrain, immediately marks out a piece as hymenaeal. For example, Sappho fr. 111 V includes the refrain *ὕμνηαον* in alternating lines, generating a sense of ritual, while Theocritus rounds off his wedding song for Helen with the slightly longer version *Ῥμῆν ὦ Ῥμέναιε* (18.19). Catullus incorporates the refrain into poem 61, where many of the stanzas end with the cry repeated and inverted (*o Hymenae Hymen / o Hymen Hymenae*). As well as the refrain we also find conventions in theme and style which appear to be shared across the genre. As we might expect, wedding poetry praises the bride and groom, extolling the bride's beauty, the groom's manliness, and the desirability of the marriage (Sappho frs. 108, 111, 112, 113 V).¹² This praise is often achieved by means of a comparison to something regarded as conventionally praiseworthy (a technique known as *eikasia*). Michael of Italy (*Or. ad Mich. Oxit.*) tells us that Sappho compared her bridegrooms to horses and her brides to flowers, while according to Himerius, Sappho's bride was compared to an apple and her groom to Achilles (*Or.* 9.16). The surviving fragments give us evidence of this tradition: fr. 111 V compares the groom to Ares, while in fr. 115 V the poet ponders what the most apt comparison would be before settling on a sapling: *τίω σ', ὦ φίλε γάμβρε, κάλως ἐικάσδω; / ὄρπακι βραδίνῳ σε μάλιστ' ἐικάσδω*. The ritualistic repetition of the verb *ἐικάσδω* at the line end suggests that this is a conventional motif, and an expected part of the ceremonial praise. Similarly, the chorus of girls in Theocritus 18 compares Helen to the spring, a cypress tree, and a racehorse:

¹² See Hague (1983) for hymenaeal techniques of praise.

Ἀὼς ἀντέλλοισα καλὸν διέφανε πρόσωπον,
 πότνια Νύξ, τό τε λευκὸν ἔαρ χειμῶνος ἀνέντος·
 ὦδε καὶ ἁ χρυσέα Ἑλένα διεφαίνεται ἐν ἡμῖν.
 πιεῖρα μεγάλα ἄτ' ἀνέδραμε κόσμος ἀρούρα
 ἢ κάπῳ κυπάρισσος, ἢ ἄρματι Θεσσαλὸς ἵππος,
 ὦδε καὶ ἁ ῥοδόχρως Ἑλένα Λακεδαίμονι κόσμος· (26–31)

As dawn rises it reveals a beautiful face, lady Night, like the pale spring when the winter has loosened its grip, so too is golden Helen revealed among us. As when a cypress tree grows up as the adornment of rich ploughland or a garden, or as a Thessalian horse is the adornment of its chariot, so too is rosy-skinned Helen the adornment of Sparta.

The *comparanda* are all traditional images for expressing youthful beauty and vigour: flowers and spring tie into the *topos* of assimilating human and natural fertility, while the use of a sapling to represent youthful vigour is found in Homer both of males and of females.¹³ Horses are a symbol of beauty, strength, and elegance, and are used in praise imagery throughout Greek poetry, often in erotic contexts.¹⁴ Theocritus' horse is the 'adornment of its chariot', suggesting the parallels between marriage and yoking which often underlie comparisons of women to horses.¹⁵ Lucian's parody of a wedding song in his *Symposium* achieves a comic effect by manipulating the *eikasia*, for he does not compare his bride and groom to mythological heroes but asserts that they are better than them (41.4–11). The fact that these conventions were well enough known to be parodied so many centuries later suggests that they formed a deep-rooted and long-lasting part of the traditional wedding song. Another traditional feature was the *makarismos*: the pronouncing of the couple as happy and blessed. Thus, for example, the Hesiodic fragment on the marriage of Peleus and Thetis describes the singing of a wedding song which begins with a *makarismos* of the groom (τρίς μά]καρ Αἰακίδῃ καὶ τετράκις ὄλβιε

¹³ Of men: Hom. *Il.* 17.53, 18.56, 18.437, *Od.* 14.175; of women: Odysseus to Nausicaa at *Od.* 6.162–9. As Hague (1983) 136–7 notes, Odysseus' comparison of Nausicaa to a sapling comes in a passage filled with hymenaeal overtones.

¹⁴ Cf. Hom. *Il.* 6.506–11 (=15.263–8); Alcim. fr. 1.50–9 *PMGF*; Anacr. fr. 417 *PMG*; Theognid. 1267–70. See also p. 176 above.

¹⁵ Cf. Anacr. fr. 417 *PMG*; Eur. *Bacch.* 1056.

Πηλεῦ, fr. 211.7 M–W). Similarly, Sappho's address to a bridegroom begins by addressing him as ὄλβιε (fr. 112 V), before praising the bride's beauty to explain the source of his happiness.¹⁶

Exempla drawn from the world of myth are a central part of most lyric poetry, and it seems likely that the *hymenaios* was no exception. At the end of *Birds*, Aristophanes includes a *hymenaios* which describes the wedding of Zeus and Hera (1731–44). Sappho fr. 44 V describes the wedding of Hector and Andromache; if this is a hymenaeal fragment, the story is presumably told as a paradigm of a happy partnership.¹⁷ This poem also focuses on the details of the wedding ritual itself: the use of spices, the playing of music, the procession, and the participation by the community, details which seem to reflect contemporary life in Mytilene rather than being drawn from Homer. The poem ends with a description of the men and women of Troy singing a celebratory *paian*, followed by a song praising the couple and likening them to the gods (ῥμνην δ' Ἑκτορα κ' Ἀνδρομάχαν θεοοικέλο[ις, 34). Here too we see myth used to mirror real-life ritual, as the praise-songs are validated by their inclusion in the mythological paradigm.

As well as praise, wedding poetry can also take on a more ribald tone, focused around the entry to the bridal house and the subsequent consummation of the marriage. Sappho fr. 110a V, for example, pokes fun at the doorkeeper whose job was to guard the house and keep the bride's friends out, mocking him for the size of his feet. Demetrius describes this kind of poem as prosaic rather than poetic, responding to the earthy language and simple syntax (ἐν πεζοῖς ὀνόμασι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐν ποιητικοῖς, *On Style* 167). Similarly, Sappho fr. 111 V praises the bridegroom by comparing him to Ares but also strikes a more teasing note, suggesting that he is so tall that the roof of the house will need to be lifted up (ῥφοι δὴ τὸ μέλαθρον, 1). Similarly, the comparison to Ares is humorously undercut by the lesser (and tautologous) claim that he is 'bigger than a big man'

¹⁶ Cf. also Aristoph. *Birds* 1721–5; *Peace* 1333 where the *makarismos* forms part of the wedding song.

¹⁷ On the poem being for use in an actual wedding, see Rösler (1975); Contiades-Tsitsoni (1990) 102–9; for the opposite view see Kakridis (1966).

(*ἄνδρος μεγάλῳ πόλῳ μέσδων*, 6).¹⁸ This fragment is a good example of the difficulty in subdividing wedding poetry into categories, for it combines praise with a more tongue-in-cheek tone, and includes the *hymenaios* refrain despite being focused around the entry to the bridal house. Similarly, Helen's friends in Theocritus 18 begin their song by teasing Menelaus, suggesting that he is too tired and drunk to consummate the marriage:

οὔτω δὴ πρωιζὰ κατέδραθες, ὦ φίλε γαμβρέ;
 ἦ ῥά τις ἐσσί λίαν βαρυγούνατος; ἦ ῥα φίλυνπος;
 ἦ ῥα πολὺν τιν' ἔπινες, ὅκ' εἰς εὐνὰν κατεβάλλευ;
 εὐδὲν μὰν σπεύδοντα καθ' ὥραν αὐτὸν ἐχρήν τυ,
 παῖδα δ' ἑὼν σὺν παισὶ φιλοστόργῳ παρὰ ματρὶ
 παῖσδεν ἐς βαθὺν ὄρθρον, (8–13)

Have you fallen asleep so early, dear bridegroom? Or are you so heavy-limbed? Or so sleepy? Or had you drunk a lot when you were put to bed? Since you were so eager to have an early bedtime, you ought to have left the girl with her affectionate mother, to play with her friends until dawn.

Amid the light-hearted joking we find undertones of pathos, as the girls implicitly criticize Menelaus for removing his bride from the company of her mother and her age-mates. Similarly, Sappho's wedding poetry also introduces a more poignant note, often focusing on the girl's departure from her old life and the finality of the transition she is about to undergo.¹⁹ For example, Sappho fr. 114 V is an interchange between a bride and Parthenia (personified), where the bride describes herself as abandoned by virginity, and Parthenia replies that she will never return again. Similarly, fr. 107 V is a woman expressing and questioning her longing for her lost virginity. We find similar motifs elsewhere. In Theocritus 18, as well as praise of Helen's beauty and wishes for her happiness, we also find poignancy at her removal from her former companions, who are described as longing for her company as lambs long for their mother's teat

¹⁸ Kirk (1963) interprets this odd superlative as phallic humour; cf. also Lloyd-Jones (1967), though see Zellner (2006) who sees this type of 'supra-superlative' as a Sapphic feature.

¹⁹ For the anxieties involved in the transition to marriage see Seaford (1987) 106–7, Jenkins (1983).

(μεμναμένοι ὡς γαλαθῆναί / ἄρνες γειναμένας ὄϊος μαστὸν ποθέοισαι, 41–2). In Catullus 62 the motif is taken to extreme lengths, parodying the conventions of the genre: the chorus of girls describe the impending wedding as a traumatic and devastating event for the bride, whose marriage is compared to rape after the sack of a city (*quid faciunt hostes capta crudelius urbe?* 25). The expression of these negative emotions in a wedding context seems surprising to us, but on an anthropological level it can be explained as focusing the girl's real-life worries and helping to diffuse them. Marriage is an important and life-changing event, and thus potentially frightening. The ritualized trauma works through the real fears, presenting them in a regulated manner. Articulating these anxieties thus serves as a way to lessen them, portraying them as a normal and necessary part of the transition and so a healthy rather than destructive response to change.

HYMENAIOS AND PARTHENEIA

In terms of motifs and ideas, there is a noticeable degree of continuity between *hymenaios* and what we have seen in *partheneia*. This is not surprising: literary genres are not watertight or discrete units, and both genres are connected with female transition and so deal with a similar set of issues and use similar language to do so. As I argued in Chapter 5, female transition should not be understood as a single cut-off point but in terms of a progression beginning at puberty and ending with the birth of the first child. *Hymenaios* forms one part of this process, while *partheneia* forms another: it is therefore unsurprising if we find overlap between some of the motifs and ideals of the genre. Unlike *partheneia*, *hymenaios* was not an exclusively female experience, for marriage was an important transition in the life of a man as well as a woman. However, while marriage may have been a *telos* for a man, it was not the only *telos*: men were expected to become politically active citizens and warriors as well as husbands and fathers. For a woman, marriage and the bearing of children was the ultimate focus and goal of her life, and it is therefore unsurprising

that *hymenaios* focuses more on the experience of the bride than of her new husband.²⁰

In addition, we find common features between the way the Greeks expressed their transition rituals, and the way similar rituals are performed in other cultures. Indeed, certain features of the Greek wedding are recognizably similar to our own rituals: for example, the ribald teasing of the bridegroom is paralleled by the modern tradition of the best-man's speech, or the elements of lamentation by the expectation that the bride's mother should shed tears. In more general terms, the idea of the transitional ritual as something positive and necessary, but also something potentially traumatic and dangerous, is one which we find in other types of *rite de passage* and across a range of cultures.²¹ Similarly, construing the transition as a kind of death is a common motif, representing the finality of what has happened and the irreversible change between the old and the new life of the participant. These cross-cultural similarities should make us more confident in building our picture of the genre from a range of sources. While the details of wedding ritual varied between different communities, the central meaning that the wedding had in Greek culture was essentially unchanged over the period examined, and these continuities are reflected in the ritual songs.

HYMENAIOS IN TRAGEDY

As various scholars have noted, tragedy makes particularly extensive use of wedding ritual, including specific allusions to the *hymenaios*.²² The motivations for and effects of this imagery can vary. At the simplest level, *hymenaios* can be evoked as a celebratory genre, to create a contrast with the bleak situation on-stage. This use of the

²⁰ Scholars often present *hymenaios* as a female-orientated genre: cf. Wilson (1996) 142–4; Lardinois (2001). While there is an important element of truth in this, however, it rather overstates the case: as I argue below (pp. 255–62) I prefer to see *hymenaios* as a genre which reflects the unification of the sexes, albeit with a bias towards the female experience.

²¹ Cf. van Gennep (1960) esp. 116–45 on betrothal and marriage.

²² See, for example, Seaford (1987); Loraux (1987); Rehm (1994).

genre is functionally identical to the ironic use of the *paian* in contexts of mourning: the tragedians can create an emotional effect by juxtaposing two things usually felt to be opposite, such as weddings and death. Thus when Admetus mourns his wife's death in *Alcestis*, he contrasts the groans of lamentation with the *hymenaios* that was sung on their wedding day (*νῦν δ' ὑμεναίων γόος ἀντίπαλος*, 922). Similarly, in *Prometheus Bound* the Chorus of Oceanids contrast the *hymenaios* they sang at Prometheus' wedding with the song they are singing about his current situation (*τὸ διαμφίδιον δέ μοι μέλος προσέπτα / τὸδ' ἐκείνὸ θ' ὅτ' ἀμφὶ λουτρὰ καὶ / λέχος σὸν ὑμεναίου / ἰότατι γάμων*, 555–8), while in *Agamemnon* the *hymenaios* at the wedding of Paris and Helen is ironically contrasted with the destruction that this marriage brought upon the community (699–716). In Euripides' *Phaethon* this contrast is left for the audience rather than the characters to make: the play contains a *hymenaios* (fr. 781.227–44), complete with *hymenaios*-tag (*Ἵμῆν Ἵμῆν*, 227) and *makarismos* (*ὦ μάκαρ*, 240), yet while the *hymenaios* is sung in sincerity, the audience knows that Phaethon is now dead, and hence the praise and jubilation takes on an ironic meaning.

This contrast between the joyous associations of marriage and the devastating events of tragedy is further explored by the use of the 'marriage to death' motif. Marriage is regarded not only as a source of fertility and new life, but also as the natural *telos* of a woman. Thus when a young girl dies before her wedding, her failure to achieve a marriage is dealt with by describing her death as an ironic form of wedding, to Hades rather than to a mortal bridegroom. This phenomenon is not unique to tragedy and is probably assisted by the similarity of wedding and funerary rituals.²³ Indeed, inscriptional evidence such as the Phrasicleia *korē* (CEG 24) suggests that it was a standard *topos* in Greek thought.²⁴ However, it is a device which tragedy uses particularly richly. For example in *Antigone*, Antigone's death occurs in place of her marriage to Haemon; she herself

²³ See Rehm (1994) 29.

²⁴ The inscription reads *σῆμα Φρασικλείας κόρε κεκλέσσομαι αἰεὶ / ἀντὶ γάμο παρὰ θεῶν τοῦτο λαχὼσ' ὄνομα*: 'I am the marker of Phrasicleia. I shall always be called a maiden, having received this name from the gods in place of a marriage.'

describes her death in terms of a marriage and it is construed in those terms elsewhere in the play.²⁵ Thus Antigone first laments her lack of a marriage, claiming that her death has deprived her of the *hymenaios* to which she was entitled (οὐθ' ὑμεναίων / ἐγκληρον, οὐτ' ἐπὶ νυμ-/φείοις πώ μέ τις ὕμνος ὕ-/μνησεν, 813–16), before going on to envisage her death as a marriage to Hades (ἀλλ' Ἀχέροντι νυμφεύσω, 816). Similarly the Chorus describe her tomb as her bridal chamber (804), a motif picked up by Antigone herself later in the scene (ὦ τύμβος, ὦ νυμφεῖον, 891). Similarly in *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, Iphigeneia's sacrifice is brought about by the pretence of her marriage to Achilles, and the wedding and funerary imagery is combined to create a broader irony.²⁶ The similarity in the two rituals allows Agamemnon to speak of Iphigeneia's death in a manner which she can interpret as referring to her wedding, for example the separation from her parents (667–70), a *topos* of wedding song but also an inevitable consequence of death. The prevalence of the 'marriage to death' motif means that it can also be deployed in circumstances other than the death of a young girl. In Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, Evadne responds to the failure of her marriage by committing suicide on her husband's pyre: the wedding imagery in her language makes it clear that she regards her death as a continuation of her marriage. Like Antigone, she suggests both that she is denied her marriage (ἴτω φῶς γάμοι τε, 1025) and also that her death will *be* a form of marriage, as she imagines her reunion with her husband in the underworld in overtly sexual terms (πόσει συμμείξασα φίλω, / χρώτα χροῖ πέλας θεμένα, / Φερσεφόνας ἥξω θαλάμους, 'joining with my dear husband, placing skin on skin, I will come to the bedchamber of Persephone', 1020–3). As well as married women, the motif can also be applied to men: in Euripides' *Phaethon* the play is set on Phaethon's wedding day, thus enhancing the poignancy of his destruction, and the discovery of the young man's body occurs just before his father arrives leading the wedding chorus (fr. 781). Moreover, the hypothesis to the play tells us that Phaethon found out his father's identity as he came

²⁵ Cf. Seaford (1987) 107–8.

²⁶ See Foley (1982); Seaford (1987) 108–10.

of age (γεννηθέντι δ' ἐν ἡλικίᾳ, 5), which implicitly links Phaethon's wedding to his passage into adulthood.²⁷

The 'marriage to death' motif picks up a theme in the play (the death of a young woman or man) and explores it via means of ritual language. A still more common tragic theme is that of dysfunctional relationships, especially those within the family. Drawing on wedding ritual, which is associated with positive and constructive gender alignment, creates an ironic effect when what is in fact described is the breakdown of male–female relationships. For example, the beginning of the *Trachiniae* uses wedding language to foreshadow the irony that Heracles' sexual relationships will be his undoing. Deianeira laments her lot in life by describing the unmarried *parthenos* in terms familiar from wedding imagery: a flower in a secluded location, protected from the outside world and its dangers:²⁸

τὸ γὰρ νεάζον ἐν τοιοῖσδε βόσκεται
 χώροις αὐτοῦ, καὶ νιν οὐ θάλλπος θεοῦ,
 οὐδ' ὄμβρος, οὐδὲ πνευμάτων οὐδὲν κλονεῖ,
 ἀλλ' ἡδοναῖς ἄμοχθον ἐξαίρει βίον
 ἐς τοῦθ', ἕως τις ἀντὶ παρθένου γυνῇ
 κληθῇ, λάβῃ τ' ἐν νυκτὶ φροντῖδων μέρος,
 ᾗτοι πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἢ τέκνων φοβουμένη. (144–50)

A young life is nourished in such places of its own, the god's heat does not disturb it, nor rain, nor any winds, but it raises up its life in pleasure, without toil, up until the time when it is called a woman instead of a girl, and it receives its portion of cares in the night, fearing for husband or children.

The wedding imagery is continued when the Chorus portray Heracles' triumphant return as the arrival of the bridegroom to his marital house (205–15). Heracles is described as *μελλόνυμφος* (207), constructing him as a young man about to enter married life for the first time rather than a mature husband returning to his wife after an

²⁷ Diggle (1970) 36–7 suggests that Clymene's motivation for revealing Phaethon's paternity is to alert Phaethon to the fact that his new bride is his half-sister: this gives a logical reason for the revelation coming when it does, but does not preclude a more symbolic one also applying.

²⁸ Cf. Sapph. fr. 105ab; Catull. 62.39–47. See Rehm (1994) 72–84 on wedding imagery in *Trach.*

absence. Yet the marriage imagery is truer than the Chorus realize, for Heracles is indeed bringing his new 'bride' back to his house, and it is his failure to respect the rights of his legitimate wife that will lead to his death.²⁹ The contrast between the positive ritual world of marriage and the dysfunctional sexual relationships in the play is also found in *Agamemnon*, in the erotic language Clytemnestra uses to describe her husband's death (1389–92).³⁰ Clytemnestra evokes the lyric *topos* of the *locus amoenus*, a commonplace of marital imagery dating back to the Hieros Gamos in the *Iliad* (14.294–351).³¹ However, the 'dew' (δρόσος, 1390) with which she is bathed is not the usual imagery of flowing water and fertility, but her husband's blood. Clytemnestra herself connects this imagery to that of fertility when she describes her response as rejoicing as the earth rejoices in the birth of flowers: χαίρουσαν οὐδὲν ἥσσον ἢ διοςδότῳ / γάνει σπορητὸς κάλυκος ἐν λοχεύμασιν (1391–2). The connection between human and natural fertility is thus made by describing vegetal growth in the language of human childbirth (λοχεύμασιν). This traditional erotic imagery underscores the perversion of married relationships in the play, as well as further highlighting Clytemnestra's transgression of female norms.

A similar device is assimilating marriage to rape or abduction, drawing a contrast between appropriate and inappropriate ways of acting upon sexual desire. For example, the *Trojan Women* makes consistent use of wedding imagery to highlight the plight of the captive women and their future rape and enslavement. The perverted wedding language draws a poignant contrast between the women's former situation and the future they actually face. In particular, Cassandra's monody at 308–40 draws heavily on the language of *hymenaios*, including the *hymen*-tag (310, 314, 322, 331), the *makarismos* (μακάριος ὁ γαμέτας, / μακαρία δ' ἐγὼ, 311–12), and the holding of bridal torches (ἄνεχε, πάρεχε, φῶς φέρε· σέβω φλέγω—/ ἰδοὺ ἰδοῦ—/ λαμπάσι τόδ' ἱερὸν, 308–10). Again, the effect is ironic:

²⁹ For views on the role of sexuality in the play, see Winnington-Ingram (1980) 78–81, Easterling (1982) 5 and Conacher (1997) 29–30 distinguish between Deianeira's desire to keep Heracles and other forms of *eros* in the play.

³⁰ See Moles (1979); Pulleyn (1997b).

³¹ For a detailed discussion of the *locus amoenus*, see Haß (1998); for its use in tragedy see Swift (2009).

the wedding she celebrates is in fact her enslavement as Agamemnon's concubine, and it marks the destruction of her family rather than its continuation.³² In *Hippolytus*, Heracles' capture of Iole after the sack of her city is portrayed as a marriage sanctioned by Aphrodite (545–54), albeit one whose violence is made explicit (*φονίοισι νυμφείοις*, 552), while in *Ion* Creousa's rapist Apollo takes her by the wrist, in a gesture recalling the wedding gesture known as *χέρ' ἐπὶ καρπῶ* (*ἐμφὺς καρποῦσιν / χερῶν*, 891–2).³³

Hymenaeal motifs in tragedy provide a rich seam of material, then, but it is one which has been extensively mined. Rather than going over examples which have been tackled in depth elsewhere, in this chapter I will focus on one particular feature of hymenaeal performance which has been less thoroughly explored: the mixed-sex chorus. While performances of *hymenaios* would no doubt have varied, we find a consistent association between mixed singing and wedding ritual. I shall therefore examine two plays which have a good claim to contain what purport to be mixed-sex choruses: *Hippolytus* and Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women*.

THE MIXED CHORUS

Mixed-sex choral performance is a surprising phenomenon given what we know about the social contexts of the Greek chorus. The most fundamental feature of a chorus is its uniformity: each of its members belongs to the same category. Occasions where more than one chorus performs are often competitions, where categories would have been determined by choral groupings as well as by type of song, just as men's and boys' events were kept separate at athletic competitions. Where we find multiple choruses at an event, we normally find them performing consecutively, not simultaneously. The concept of mixed choral performance, therefore, sits oddly with the cultural

³² See Barlow (1986) on 308–40; Rehm (1994) 128–36.

³³ Cf. Rehm (1994) 14–17, 35–6, 39–40, and see figs. 2 and 3 for the *XEK* gesture on vases depicting weddings. The symbolism of the gesture is also addressed by Jenkins (1983).

assumptions bound up in the concept of a chorus. It therefore seems plausible to suppose that the connotations it carries must be particularly marked.

Lucian's *On Dance* 12 provides us with explicit testimony about the meaning conveyed by a mixed-sex chorus. In this passage he has been discussing how training in dancing can teach important life skills, and goes on to give an example:

ὅμοια δὲ καὶ οἱ τὸν ὄρμον καλούμενον ὀρχούμενοι ποιούσιν. ὁ δὲ ὄρμος ὀρχησίς ἐστιν κοινὴ ἐφήβων τε καὶ παρθένων, παρ' ἓνα χορευόντων καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ὄρμῳ ἐοικότων· καὶ ἡγείται μὲν ὁ ἔφηβος τὰ νεανικὰ ὀρχούμενος καὶ ὅσοις ὕστερον ἐν πολέμῳ χρήσεται, ἡ παρθένος δὲ ἔπεται κοσμίως τὸ θῆλυ χορεύειν διδάσκουσα, ὡς εἶναι τὸν ὄρμον ἐκ σωφροσύνης καὶ ἀνδρείας πλεκόμενον.

Something similar is done by those who dance what is called the Necklace. The Necklace is a dance of boys and girls together who move in a row and truly resemble a necklace. The boy leads, dancing the steps of young manhood, and those which he will later use in war, the maiden follows, showing how to do the female dance with decency; and so the necklace is woven out of chastity and manliness.

Combining the sexes in the Necklace dance expresses the complementary roles that they play in society. Lucian has already suggested that in a sense all dances by young men prepare them for war and express their manliness (8–11). Here, however, the mixing of boys and girls highlights gender as a theme in the dance. The presence of the girls crystallizes the audience's awareness of how they differ from the boys; the difference in their dance steps reflects a wider reality.

Other texts referring to mixed choruses also draw on the way that they emphasize complementary gender roles. Some link it more directly to the way genders are combined within society—namely marriage. At *Odyssey* 23.130–40, Odysseus wants to cover the noise of killing the suitors, and so tells Penelope to arrange for something that sounds like a wedding feast to be performed. The feature which makes it instantly identifiable as such is that men and women are singing together:

τοῖσιν δὲ μέγα δῶμα περιστεναχίζετο πόσσην
ἀνδρῶν παιζόντων καλλιζώνων τε γυναικῶν.
ὦδὲ δέ τις εἶπεσκε δόμων ἔκτοθεν ἀκούων·
ἦ μάλα δὴ τίς ἔγημε πολυμνήστην βασιλῆαν· (23.146–9)

The great hall resounded with the feet of dancing men and beautifully girdled women. *And so* anyone who heard from outside the house would say, ‘Oh, so someone has actually married the much-courtied queen.’

Men and women are also portrayed as dancing together on the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad* (18.590–606). Here the occasion for the dance is not stated. Arguably it is unlikely to be a wedding itself since we have already seen a wedding procession earlier on the shield (18.491–7). However, the epithet applied to the girls (ἀλφεισίβοιαι) refers to dowries, and suggests that there are sexual and marital overtones to the occasion. The boys and girls are described as dancing ἐπὶ καρπῷ χεῖρας ἔχοντες (594), reflecting the χεῖρ’ ἐπὶ καρπῷ gesture when the groom takes the bride by the wrist, which formed part of classical wedding ritual and is often alluded to in literature and art. Gender differences and roles are also suggested by the way the poet dwells on the appearance of the boys and girls, contrasting male and female clothing, and the knives worn by the boys with the garlands worn by the girls. In the description of the wedding procession on the pseudo-Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles* (272–9), we find a similar emphasis on how both sexes participate in the songs and festivities. Plato advocates mixed-sex dances as a means of organizing marriage (*Laws* 6.771e–772a), and the mixed-sex procession in honour of Artemis described by Xenophon of Ephesus is a means of finding marriage partners (*Ephesiaca* 1.2–3).

A text which actually purports to be a wedding song performed by a mixed-sex chorus is Catullus 62. Catullus is not bound into any one cultural setting, and can pick and choose elements from different Greek and Roman *mores* that appeal to him.³⁴ The choice of an amoebean style is usually thought to be derived from Greek pastoral poetry, and examples can be found in Theocritus. However, Catullus differs from these pastoral models in that his alternating stanzas are sung by choral groups rather than two individuals. Thus the alternation suggests different attitudes towards an occasion rather than a conversation between two speakers. The poem’s scenario and the

³⁴ See Godwin (1995) in his introduction to 62 for Roman features, including agricultural detail (wedding vines to trees) and colloquial language. Fedeli (1983) ch. 1 examines the mixing of cultural *topoi* in Catullus 61.

'stage directions' are imaginary ones; there is no reason to suppose that Catullus' song was designed to be performed by a real mixed chorus, or that it was designed to be a direct pastiche of another poem (in the way that, say, poem 51 is directly modelled on Sappho fr. 31 V). However, it seems likely that in composing this poem, Catullus knew of and was drawing on a tradition of mixed-sex choruses being associated with weddings. Other details of the poem (for example the alternating style, or the competitive 'capping') are found in other types of Greek poetry, but might also be drawn from this tradition. Naturally this example comes with caveats: Catullus' poem is a crafted art-piece written for a sophisticated literate audience, not a direct relic of a performance culture. Nevertheless, Catullus chooses to introduce a mixed chorus in a poem which elsewhere echoes the themes and motifs of Greek wedding poetry, and presumably does so for a reason.

In searching for the tradition on which Catullus could be drawing, we find tantalizing hints in Sappho which seem to corroborate this model. Fragment 30 V describes the night-long musical vigil outside the bridal house. In particular the poem describes a group of girls (πάρθενοι δ[/ παννυχίδοι[σ]αί[, 2–3) and a group of boys (who are specifically the groom's party) as responsible for the festivities (ἀλλ' ἐγέρθεις ἡϊθ[ε / στείχε σοῖς ὑμάλικ[ας, 6–7). Fragment 44 V, describing the wedding of Hector and Andromache, describes a slightly different version of mixed singing: adult women (γύναικες) sing a women's ritual cry of Eleleu, while men sing the male equivalent of Paian (31–3). Again the focus is on the combining of both sexes, while each group nevertheless remains aligned to its own gender role.

There are direct linguistic parallels with Catullus 62 in other hymenaeal fragments, which suggests that his poem is built more generally on Sapphic models.³⁵ Catullus starts his poem with an address to Hesperus, the evening star whose presence symbolizes the journey to the bridal house. The boys' and girls' attitudes to Hesperus are opposite, reflecting their attitude to the marriage itself. The girls' hostility to the star, and their specific accusation that it tears a girl from her mother's embrace (*qui natam possis complexu*

³⁵ Cf. Bowra (1961) 223–5 who also links the imagery and themes in Catull. 62 with Sapphic *epithalamia*.

avellere matris, 21) reflects the pathos implicit in the more understated Sappho fr. 104a V, where Hesperus is described as taking a child from her mother (*φέρης ἄπυ μάτερι παῖδα*, 2).³⁶ The girls' description of virginity lost as a flower plucked and ruined in a meadow (39–47) also echoes Sappho fr. 105b V, where a hyacinth is described as crushed by shepherds (*οἶαν τὰν ὑάκινθον ἐν ὥρεσι ποίμενες ἄνδρες / πόσσι καταστεῖβοισι, χάμαι δὲ τε πόρφυρον ἄνθος*). Similarly, the boys' account of agricultural activity as a metaphor for marriage (wedding the vine to the elm, 49–55) perhaps reflects Sappho's metaphor of the apple and the apple-pickers ('just as the sweet apple blushes red on the top of the branch, on the highest tip of the topmost bough; the apple-pickers have forgotten it', *οἶον τὸ γλυκύμαλον ἐρεύθεται ἄκρῳ ἐπ' ὕσδῳ, / ἄκρον ἐπ' ἀκροτάτῳ, λελάθοντο δὲ μαλοδρόπῃες*, fr. 105a1–2 V). Various scholars have connected the two Sapphic fragments and suggested that they are part of a single poem, possibly sung in amoebean form by two groups.³⁷ In this case the parallelism with Catullus would be even more precise. In general, the attitude towards marriage expressed by Catullus' girls seems to reflect (in extreme form) some of the ambiguity and fears we find in Sappho's lyrics, for example fr. 107 and 114 V (also amoebean, though probably between solo singers). Similar ambiguity is also expressed in Catullus 61, where despite a much more positive approach to marriage, Hymen is still described as abducting the bride (*rapis*, 3) and as taking her from her mother's lap (58–9). The bride is described as weeping (80–3), a *topos* also reflected in Catullus 66, where the narrator wonders why brides regularly weep on their wedding night (15–17).

It seems likely then that in composing his *epithalamion*, Catullus drew heavily on Sapphic models (as one might expect given that Sappho was famous in antiquity for her wedding songs) and that he alludes to Sappho in details of performance as well as themes and

³⁶ The meaning of the line is disputed, as is the reading *ἀπὸ* (Page (1955) prints *ἄποιον*). I here follow the interpretation of Treu (1968) 223 in understanding the phrase to mean 'away from the mother': cf. also Davison (1968) 246; Clay (1980); West (1994) 45.

³⁷ Smyth (1900) 249, Davison (1968) 244. Hunter (1983) also supports the connection on the basis of Longus' adaptation in *Daphnis and Chloe*. See Griffith (1989) for an account of the debate and the various interpretations of the fragments.

verbal echoes.³⁸ The choice of a mixed amoebean chorus, aligning themselves with the bride and the groom respectively, reflects an earlier poetic tradition of which Catullus was aware.³⁹ This is certainly not to say that *all* wedding songs would have been composed in this form. However, the mixed chorus itself would have triggered assumptions of marriage in the minds of an ancient audience. Indeed, such a connection is appropriate, since we know that both the bride's and the groom's friends had a role to play in the wedding festivities, that men and women attended the wedding feast, and that marriage ritual itself symbolizes the combining of male and female.⁴⁰

Turning to drama, we find similar themes emerging when we examine the chorus of old men and women in the *Lysistrata*. For most of the play the chorus is divided into two hemi-choruses, who enter separately. Until they unite at 1042, they are polarized along gender lines. Their interaction consists of competitive and aggressive banter, often focused on a 'male' or 'female' view. This model of competitive capping followed by resolution is similar to the pattern of Catullus 62, and could be based on the conventions of real-life mixed choruses.⁴¹ In addition, much of the banter in *Lysistrata* contains sexual undertones, as the hostility between the two groups is expressed through the sexual tension between them.

The choruses closely echo each other, both in structure and in linguistic detail. For example, at 781–96 the men tell the story of Melanion to demonstrate that men are better off without women. The women rebut this by telling the story of Timon (805–12). 614–705 is

³⁸ For Sappho and wedding songs cf. Himer. *Or.* 9.4; Mich. Ital. *Or. ad Mich. Oxit. Anth. Pal.* 7.407; Demetr. *Eloc.* 132.

³⁹ The mock-hymenaios at Aristoph. *Peace* 1333–54 is amoebean but not mixed-sex. Yet there is still some trace of alignment with bride's or groom's party at 1349–50 where one group praises/teases the bride's 'fig', and the other the groom's.

⁴⁰ Also see Gernet and Boulanger (1932) 38–40 on mixed dancing and marriage. Euangelos, *Anakalyptomene* (K–A 5.184–5, fr. 1 = CAF 3, 376, *ap.* Athenaeus 14.644d–f) describes men and women at the wedding feast: both genders are involved, but they sit at separate tables; similarly, Men. *Dys.* 949 describes women at the wedding feast.

⁴¹ Henderson (1987) and Sommerstein (1990) both note the balanced structure of the choral interaction. It is also worth noting that this choral arrangement, like that of the *Hippolytus*, is unique, and seems to have been introduced to fulfil a poetic function in the play. Henderson (1987) 98 notes that 'there is no other certain arrangement like [this] in comedy'.

also a capping structure. The men strip down to prepare for action, explaining their patriotic loyalty to Athens. The women then do the same, explaining the civic importance of the ritual roles they perform. They then take it in turns to taunt and threaten each other. Their language is closely related (for example, τῆς θεοῖς ἐχθρᾶς πατάξαι τῇσδε γραὸς τὴν γνάθον, 635, versus τῷδὲ γ' ἀψήκτω πατάξω τῷ κοθόρνῳ τὴν γνάθον, 657). Sexual imagery underlies their banter. At 377–8 the women throw water over the men to put out their torches, but describe it as a λουτρὸν νυμφικόν. Both choral groups strip off clothing as the hostility between them increases. This is introduced as a gesture in preparation for fighting, but women stripping in front of men would have carried sexual rather than aggressive overtones. The men's insults at 671–6 are sexual ones (χειρουργία 672, ἵππικώτατον 677), and the women's response to this at 694–5 is a sexual threat (ὥς εἰ καὶ μόνον κακῶς ἐρεῖς, ὑπερχολῶ γάρ, / αἰετὸν τίκτοντα κάνθαρός σε μαιεύσομαι).⁴²

The choruses unite when the women become reconciled to the men, and make overtures of friendship towards them. This model is also reminiscent of Catullus 62. There, the girls' silence suggests that they have dropped (or at least hidden) their hostility towards marriage, and we are left with the impression of marriage as a unifying rather than divisive force. The language which the Aristophanic chorus uses after they unite also contains sexual overtones, playing on double entendres between the language of feasting and the language of sex.⁴³ The mixed chorus of *Lysistrata* is not in itself a wedding chorus, but it is a chorus which negotiates gender relationships and

⁴² Sommerstein (1990) suggests that χειρουργία at 673 refers to manual stimulation of the penis. ἵππικώτατον at 676 refers to the sexual position known as 'equestrian', with the woman on top (cf. 60, 619, *Wasps* 501–2, *Peace* 899–900). Henderson (1987) on 674–7 notes the sexual innuendo of ναυμαχεῖν and πλεῖν, which also refer to the partner who is on top (cf. 59–60, 411, *Frogs* 434). 694–5 refers to a fable where the beetle avenges itself on the eagle by breaking its eggs: both Sommerstein and Henderson suggest a metaphorical use here referring to the testicles.

⁴³ Sommerstein (1990) on 1061–4 notes the sexual nature of the language. ἔννος ('pea-soup') suggests vaginal secretions, cf. *Eccl.* 645–7, and *Peace* 716, 885 where ζωμός is used of cunnilingus. δελφάκιον ('piggy') is well-attested slang for the female genitals, cf. *Acharn.* 786, Hesych. δ 599, Krat. fr. 4 K–A. ἀπαλός is used of women's flesh at line 418 and at *Eccl.* 902, *Sapph.* fr. 82 V.

enacts the differences between men and women and their ultimate union. Thus, the underlying themes of the *Lysistrata* chorus reflect the themes inherent in marriage; this is unsurprising in a play which deals with the disruption and restoration of gender roles.

The associations of mixed choral performance, then, are linked to the social negotiation of gender roles, and hence the celebration of a wedding. As we shall see, both *Hippolytus* and Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women* make use of hymenaeal language more generally in order to bring out ideas of destructive or mismanaged sexuality; the mixed chorus thus plays an important role in alerting the audience to the relevance of *hymenaios*. Viewed in this light, the mixed chorus in these tragedies ceases to become a problem to be explained away, and becomes something central to the themes of the play. In short, it is something worth innovating with.

HIPPOLYTUS

The mixed chorus in the third stasimon of *Hippolytus* has long been a subject of contention among scholars. Textual evidence suggests the ode is sung by two separate choral groups, one the original tragic chorus (women of Troezen) and the other a group of men. If the text is allowed to stand, the antiphony of the two choruses here is unique in surviving tragedy. There has therefore been much contention over whether this is plausible, or whether there can be another way of interpreting or emending the text. However, once we regard the mixed chorus not as an anomaly but as an evocation of real-life choral convention the ode becomes considerably easier to understand. As we have seen, mixed-sex choral singing is itself a hymenaeal motif; in addition, the ode is permeated by themes and *topoi* of wedding poetry. Moreover, the hymenaeal language is connected with the theme of dysfunctional sexuality which runs throughout the play and which drives its action. The mixed chorus, then, is not something which needs to be explained away or apologized for, but a

deliberate piece of tragic innovation which ties in with and enhances Euripides' presentation of the myth.⁴⁴

Is there a mixed chorus?

The mixed chorus hypothesis was originally set out by Verrall, and subsequently accepted by Murray and Diggle, who follow it in their editions of the play.⁴⁵ It arises from the alternating genders of the participles by which the chorus refer to themselves (κεύθων 1105, λεύσσω 1107 (and in some MSS also at 1121), ἐϋξάμενα 1111, μεταβαλλομένα 1118). The most straightforward interpretation of this is that the stanzas are sung by people of different gender. Indeed, while the text can be emended to give a consistent gender, doing so is a fairly difficult process.⁴⁶

If we are not content to allow a mixed chorus and cannot satisfactorily emend the text, we must come up with some other explanation for the shifting genders. The scholia allege that the chorus use the masculine because they are speaking as the poet's mouthpiece, but this is unparalleled in tragedy, where the dramatic identity of the chorus is not challenged in this way.⁴⁷ A more plausible explanation would be that women speaking in the abstract can use the masculine to refer to themselves, as Wilamowitz argues.⁴⁸ However, the examples he provides for females using a singular masculine participle to refer to themselves are problematic.⁴⁹ Women can use a masculine *plural* to generalize about themselves (a phenomenon which Wilamowitz correctly does not adduce as relevant), but even then there is no parallel for this switching of genders within a single ode. The

⁴⁴ The connection between the mixed chorus and hymenaeal language has also been suggested by Burnett (1986) 173–4. My treatment of the play here derives from Swift (2006).

⁴⁵ See Verrall (1889), 1 of the introduction. Bond (1980) also argues in favour of the mixed chorus, while Halleran (1995) on 1102–50 gives an overview of the arguments for and against the mixed chorus interpretation.

⁴⁶ Barrett (1964) 369 'emendation is not easy'.

⁴⁷ See Schwartz (1887) on 1102.

⁴⁸ von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1891) on 1103.

⁴⁹ Barrett (1964) 366–7 outlines the difficulties with them. However, see Kannicht (1969) on Eur. *Hel.* 1630.

switching of genders undermines Wilamowitz's argument: if women can refer to themselves as males in the abstract, this must depend on the fact that the male participle is perceived as 'standard'—that is, the listener will not notice the oddity.⁵⁰ Switching between the two forms, on the other hand, seems designed to draw attention to the shifting genders. A Greek audience would find it baffling, particularly since tragic mimesis already requires a certain suspension of disbelief as the listener must acclimatize himself to 'hear' the chorus's male voices as female ones. This switching of participles, then, seems a priori difficult, as well as being unheard of in extant Greek. On the other hand, assuming the arrival of a second chorus solves the participle problem straightforwardly.

A potential problem with the second chorus theory is the convention that secondary choruses are normally introduced on their appearance into the play.⁵¹ However, Verrall plausibly suggested that the male singers of the third stasimon consisted of the same group of huntsmen who were introduced at the start of the play as an additional chorus (58–71). It is true that the chorus is not reintroduced despite remaining silent for nearly all of the play, but this is less problematic since we already know of their existence. Immediately before the third stasimon, Hippolytus calls on his contemporaries to address him and escort him from the country (ἴτ', ὦ νέοι μοι τῇσδε γῆς ὁμήλικες, / προσείπαθ' ἡμᾶς καὶ προπέμψατε χθονός, 1098–9)—a phrase which arguably in itself could stand in for the introduction of the chorus. As Bond points out, the phrasing he uses is similar to the formula by which the subsidiary chorus is announced at 58–60 (ἔπεσθ' ἄδοντες ἔπεσθε, 58).⁵² There is no reason to believe that the companions of the opening scene need be a different group of people

⁵⁰ So ὁ ἄνθρωπος can be used to refer to mankind generally whereas ἡ ἄνθρωπος is specifically a woman; similarly ὁ ἵππος is the general word for a horse, while ἡ ἵππος means 'mare', and we sometimes find some kind of qualifier to make the gender apparent, precisely because the noun uses the male form as 'standard' and a horse of either sex could be meant (e.g. θήλεες ἵπποι *Il.* 5.269; ἵπποι θήλειαι 11.680, *Od.* 4.635; ἡ θήλεια ἵππος *Hdt.* 3.86): see LSJ s.v. ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος. Moorhouse (1982) 8–10 discusses this in terms of 'marked' and 'unmarked' nouns, whereby the masculine indicates non-commitment in terms of gender, but the feminine carries a more specific meaning.

⁵¹ Taplin (1977) 186 and 230–8.

⁵² Bond (1980) 60.

from the *δμήλικες* of 1098.⁵³ One might imagine that he is meant to be accompanied by this group of his age-mates on hunting expeditions, and so it is not surprising that they go with him when he leaves the house.⁵⁴ I envisage the male chorus leaving the stage after the end of the stasimon, to follow Hippolytus who has already left.⁵⁵ The time between their leaving and the messenger reporting Hippolytus' death is admittedly extremely short, but the timing surrounding tragic odes is always loose and variable, and I do not see strict 'realism' of chronology being a major problem.⁵⁶

A subsidiary chorus *per se* is not unique in tragedy. We find one in *Phaethon* (fr. 781.227), and the scholiast on *Hippolytus* 58 mentions subsidiary choruses in the *Alexandros* and *Antiope*. We even have examples of other choruses singing in alternation with the main chorus (Euripides, *Suppliant Women* 1123–64; Aeschylus, *Suppliant Women* 1018–74). The mere existence of a subsidiary chorus, even one bound in with the main chorus, should not be an insurmountable problem. It is true that the wholly antiphonal double chorus here is a step beyond this, and it would be deceptive to claim it is not a unique innovation. However, the tragedians were not averse to innovating in order to achieve a dramatic purpose, and I hope to show that the mixed chorus of the *Hippolytus* does precisely that.⁵⁷

⁵³ Murray's OCT equates the two, calling both *χορὸς κυνηγῶν*, while Diggle calls both *θεράποντες*: cf. Bond (1980) 60. Barrett (1964) 368 argues that Hippolytus' age-mates must leave with him at 1099, but this seems to me to take the 'stage directions' too literally: after all, any friends who accompany Hippolytus off-stage must only be a symbolic representation of the *μυρία . . . δμήγυρις* whom the Messenger describes at 1179–80, and it is therefore not difficult to understand the male chorus as representing part of the huge throng later described.

⁵⁴ Hippolytus' group of same-sex age-mates further enhances his portrayal as a pre-marital figure (and perhaps also as a feminine one, as discussed below).

⁵⁵ Another option would be to have the male chorus leave the stage before the end of the stasimon, leaving the female chorus to sing the epode, but I find this less likely. Having half the chorus leave mid-performance would be unique, and would surely damage the performance. While in theory it helps with the chronology problem, in practice the disruptive effect would draw attention to it, as the chorus would be effectively rushed off-stage before we expect them to leave, heightening the sense that the timing does not quite work.

⁵⁶ See Taplin (1977) 290–4. As Bond (1980) 62 points out, 'at the very least 1102–50 marks a gap of several hours'.

⁵⁷ A parallel would be the chorus's exits at Soph. *Aj.* 814; Eur. *Hel.* 385, *Alc.* 746; [Eur.] *Rh.* 564, which break the convention that choruses remain on-stage until the

**The third stasimon: initial thoughts
(back to the meadow)**

The third stasimon begins with a strophic pair consisting of generalizing *gnōmai* and the chorus's hopes for their future, before moving on to Hippolytus' situation. This part of the ode is not directly hymenaeal, but the first two stanzas establish a tone of foreboding which prepares us for the later part of the ode. The language of the *hymenaios* enters the ode in the second section, which I give here:

οὐκέτι γὰρ καθαρὰν φρέν' ἔχω, παρὰ δ' ἐλπίδ'
 ἂ λεύσσω
 ἐπεὶ τὸν Ἑλλανίας φανερώτατον ἀστέρ' Ἀφαίας
 εἶδομεν εἶδομεν ἐκ πατρὸς ὀργᾶς
 ἄλλαν ἐπ' αἶαν ἰέμενον.
 ὦ ψάμαθοι πολιήτιδος ἀκτᾶς,
 ὦ δρυμὸς ὄρεος ὅθι κυνῶν
 ὠκυπόδων μέτα θήρας ἔναιρεν
 Δίκτυνναν ἀμφὶ σεμνάν.
 οὐκέτι συζυγίαν πῶλων Ἑνετᾶν ἐπιβάσῃ
 τὸν ἀμφὶ Λίμνας τρόχον κατέχων ποδὶ
 γυμνάδος ἵππου·
 μούσα δ' ἄπνους ὑπ' ἄντυγι χορδᾶν
 λήξει πατρῶον ἀνὰ δόμον·
 ἀστέφανοι δὲ κόρας ἀνάπανλαι
 Λατοῦς βαθεῖαν ἀνὰ χλόαν·
 νυμφιδία δ' ἀπόλωλε φυγᾷ σῇ
 λέκτρων ἄμιλλα κούραις.
 ἐγὼ δὲ σῇ δυστυχίᾳ
 δάκρυσι διοίσω
 πότμον ἄποτμον. ὦ τάλανα μήτερ,
 ἔτεκες ἀνόνατα· φεῦ,
 μανίῳ θεοῖσιν.
 ἰὼ ἰὼ·
 συζύγιοι Χάριτες, τί τὸν τάλαν' ἐκ πατρίας γᾶς

end of the play, in order to allow the characters on-stage genuine solitude for dramatic purposes. Similarly, the scene-change at Aesch. *Eum.* 234 breaks the convention that a tragedy is set in one place.

οὐδὲν ἄτας αἴτιον
πέμπετε τῶνδ' ἀπ' οἴκων; (1120–50)

No longer is my mind clear, and what I see is contrary to my hope, since we saw, we saw the brightest star of Greek Aphaia rushing to another land because of his father's anger. O sands of the city's shore, O mountain thicket where he killed wild beasts with his swift hounds, along with holy Dictynna. No longer will you mount your yoked team of Enetic colts and hold your course around the Lake with your trained horses, and your unsleeping music beneath the strings' frame will cease throughout your father's house. Throughout the greenery, the resting places of Leto's daughter will be without garlands, and by your exile the contest among maidens for your bridal bed has been lost.

But I will endure an ill-fated fate in tears for your misfortune. O poor mother, you gave birth in vain. Ah, I am angry at the gods. O yoked Graces, why do you send this man, who is not at all responsible for his ruin, out of his fatherland, away from this house?

At first glance, the point of the ode's imagery seems straightforward. In imagining how the house will be different after Hippolytus' departure, the chorus think of activities typical of a young man. The reference to girls vying for him could be explained away on those terms: a natural consequence of having a talented and athletic young man in the house. Similarly, Pindar, *Pythian* 9.98–100 describes women watching Telesicrates and wishing for him as a husband or son as a result of his athletic prowess. It is worth bearing in mind that this reference, combined with the marriage theme of the myths in *Pythian* 9, often led commentators to believe that Telesicrates was actually about to be married.⁵⁸ Whether or not this is true, it suggests that commenting on a young man's sexual desirability was a standard way of praising him. Rivalry for the favours of the admired one is associated with marriage. Alcman fr. 81 *PMGF* also describes girls admiring a young man and wishing they could marry him. Conversely, Theocritus 18 describes Menelaus competing

⁵⁸ e.g. Carey (1981) 102, where he comments that Pindar describes Telesicrates' victory 'in terms designed to suggest the winning of a bride'. Instone (1996) in his introduction to *Pythian* 9 comments that the linking of the marriage motif to Telesicrates' own life was a widely held view by earlier commentators, and even he is prepared to concede that we can tell from the ode Telesicrates 'was admired by local girls and sought after as a husband' (117).

for Helen's bed (16–17).⁵⁹ As we have seen, a common feature of wedding poetry is praise of both partners for their physical attributes: Sappho praises her brides for their beauty and her grooms for their size, and comments on the desirability of both (fr. 108, 111, 112, 113 V).⁶⁰

In the case of *Hippolytus*, however, we are dealing with a character whose most prominent feature is his rejection of sexuality and his desire to remain chaste. In context, the suggestion that girls are competing for his wedding bed is not conventional but deeply ironic. This tension is emphasized by the fact that the reference to the girls is placed directly after the mention of Hippolytus putting garlands on Artemis' resting places (ἀστέφανοι δὲ κόρας ἀνάπαυλαι / Λατοῦς, 1138–9). As well as suggesting Hippolytus' extreme devotion to Artemis and to virginity, this is also a more specific allusion to Hippolytus' first appearance in the play, when he brings Artemis a garland (πλεκτός στέφανος, 73) from an uncut meadow (ἀκήρατος λειμῶν, 73–4) and immediately afterwards makes clear his hatred of Aphrodite. This allusion is further emphasized by the Chorus's reuse of the word ἀκήρατος in the third stasimon as they wish for a mind 'free from pain' (1114).⁶¹ The juxtaposition of girls and garlands in the third stasimon, then, makes it clear how inappropriate the girls' competition for Hippolytus is, and reminds us that it is not possible to praise Hippolytus in the way that one would normally celebrate a talented young aristocratic male.

The allusion to the 'uncut meadow' speech thus serves to remind us of the light which that speech casts on Hippolytus' character. The uncut meadow itself is best understood as an allusion to the eroticized *locus amoenus* of pre-tragic poetry: an isolated and idyllic meadow which forms the location for a seduction scene.⁶² The

⁵⁹ Also see Hom. *Od.* 6.244, where Nausicaa's admiration of Odysseus is expressed by her wish she could marry. Pind. *Pyth.* 10.59 also describes admiration by young girls for young men who are successful athletes.

⁶⁰ See Kirk (1963); Lloyd-Jones (1967) for a sexual interpretation of the groom's 'size'.

⁶¹ Cf. Segal (1965) 122.

⁶² e.g. Hom. *Il.* 14.346–51; *HHDem.* 4–10; Archil. fr. 196a W; Sapph. fr. 2, 94, 96, 122 V; Ibyc. fr. 286 *PMGF*. For the significance of such meadows in poetry see Foley (1994) 33–4; Bremer (1975) 268–74; Swift (2009).

meadow is a piece of imagery we find in many types of poetry, but its associations are with the time of life leading up to marriage: being linked to a meadow signifies readiness to marry, as symbolized by the flower-gathering festivals we find across Greece for girls on the brink of maturity.⁶³ The meadow is virginal but it is not chaste: it represents virginity only insofar as it is about to be lost. Hippolytus, however, envisages his meadow as expressing his closeness to Artemis and his refusal to come to terms with sexual development. The description thus sets up a tension between the traditional model and the way Hippolytus conceptualizes his meadow.⁶⁴ In particular, Euripides weaves into the speech individual elements which seem designed to trigger the audience's awareness of this model, only to set them at odds with it:

σοί τόνδε πλεκτὸν στέφανον ἐξ ἀκηράτου
 λειμῶνος, ὃ δέσποινα, κοσμήσας φέρω,
 ἐνθ' οὔτε ποιμὴν ἀξιοῖ φέρβειν βοτὰ
 οὔτ' ἡλθέ πω σίδηρος, ἀλλ' ἀκήρατον
 μέλισσα λειμῶν' ἡρινὴ διέρχεται,
 Αἰδῶς δὲ ποταμίαισι κηπεύει δρόσοις,
 ὅσοις διδακτὸν μηδὲν ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ φύσει
 τὸ σωφρονεῖν εἴληχεν ἐς τὰ πάντ' αἰεί,
 τούτοις δρέπεσθαι, τοῖς κακοῖσι δ' οὐ θέμις. (73–81)

Mistress, I bring you this woven garland I have made, gathered from an uncut meadow, where no shepherd dares pasture his flocks and where the iron has not yet come—no, an uncut meadow which the bee of spring passes through, and which Respect tends with dewy rivers, those who have obtained chastity in their nature for all time and have acquired nothing by teaching may pluck [the flowers] there, but it is not right for the base to do so.

⁶³ See Strabo 6.1.5.33–8; Pollux 1.37; Paus. 2.35.5; Schol. Aristoph. *Frogs* 344 = Soph. fr. 89.

⁶⁴ Some commentators (e.g. Barrett (1964) on 73–6) have taken the meadow to be a description of a real or fantasized *temenos* of the goddess. However, to stress this too much risks overlooking the important symbolic undertones of the piece. If there are genuine ritual elements they can perhaps be best understood by analogy with Sapph. fr. 2 V, which is a poeticized and symbolic description of a sanctuary of Aphrodite using the traditional language of the eroticized meadow.

Hippolytus' meadow possesses many of the features we find in classic descriptions of the lyric *locus amoenus*. For example, the meadow contains flowers, which are plucked to make garlands, and it is in the proximity of dewy rivers. The epithet ἡρυνή is very reminiscent of the language used in descriptions of similar scenes by Sappho and Ibycus (ἡρύνουσιν, Sapph. fr. 2.10 V; ἡρι, Ibyc. fr. 286.1 PMGF). The motif of lack of cultivation is made particularly forcefully, with the repetition of ἀκήρατος, and the explicit veto of shepherd, flocks, and ploughing. Here two normally distinct threads in the pre-tragic poetic tradition are woven together. Cultivation, and particularly ploughing, is symbolically associated with marriage and sexual maturity, while the meadow is presented as a liminal zone, where sexuality is present in the lush growth but has not yet been channelled into the social institution of marriage. Hippolytus' vision of the meadow seems to deny the sexual potential implicit in the *locus amoenus*, whilst still deploying the imagery that expresses it—an irony which would have been clear to an audience familiar with the tradition.⁶⁵

A similar effect is achieved with the other objects described in the meadow. The bee is set up in opposition to the plough and cultivation, as though it expresses the purity of the wilderness, and μέλισσα was indeed a cult title given to some priestesses of Artemis.⁶⁶ However, the bee's more common associations are with married virtue or with love, and later in *Hippolytus* it becomes the symbol for the power of Aphrodite (μέλισσα δ' οἷ' / α τις πεπόταται, 563–4).⁶⁷ In retrospect, it thus becomes clear that the bee's presence in the

⁶⁵ Ibycus' meadow is described as belonging to the Παρθένου (3), and superficially contrasted with the speaker's own violent erotic feelings. However, the meadow is 'virginal' in the sense of sexuality ripe but not yet married rather than sexuality denied, and in fact the erotic is subtly incorporated into Ibycus' description. The language used to characterize the meadow is itself sexual with its flowing waters (ρόαν / ἐκ ποταμῶν, 2–3), fruit (μηλίδες, 2; οἶνανθίδες, 4), and shade (σκιεροῖσιν ὑφ' ἔρνεσιν, 5). Thus, the 'leaking' of the erotic into the description of the meadow is what enables the audience to connect the world within the garden with the world outside, even though for the speaker they remain irreconcilable.

⁶⁶ Scholiast *ad Pind. Pyth.* 4.106, Aristoph. *Frogs* 1274. See Knox (1952) 28.

⁶⁷ The association of the bee is perhaps partly related to the idea of sting and honey, associated with 'Eros the bittersweet' (e.g. Sapph. fr. 130 V, and possibly a more explicit link in fr. 146 V). Cf. Halleran (1991) 115. Similarly, in Sem. fr. 7 W, the bee represents married virtue and the bee woman is the only good type of wife.

meadow hints at the naïveté of Hippolytus' vision: as the Chorus later remind us, it is impossible to debar Aphrodite from human life (525–42). Similarly, rivers and dew are traditionally erotic symbols, but here they are introduced only to be described as belonging to *Αἰδώς*, while the *πλεκτὸς στέφανος*, often associated with the symposium, or with rural scenes of lovers, is juxtaposed with the purity implicit in *ἀκήρατος*. Even the word *ἀκήρατος* itself has mixed resonances, as in Ibycus fr. 286 *PMGF* it is used of the garden which is simultaneously sexual and virginal.

This conflict over whether we should understand the meadow as erotic or pure is brought out more strongly in the following lines, when Hippolytus bars access to all but those who possess *σωφροσύνη* and claims that only they will be able to pick its flowers (79–81). The motif of picking flowers is associated with the transition to sexual maturity, and in particular with that of Persephone, whose story is the archetype for the necessity of sexual transition. However, it is already clear from Aphrodite's speech in the prologue, and will become still more so by the scene following this passage, that Hippolytus hates and fears this transition. In his attempt to de-eroticize the world of the meadow and make it a suitable location for his worship of Artemis, he attempts to transform flower-picking into a chaste and safe activity. Yet while picking flowers seems innocent to the virgins concerned, the audience knows that it in fact suggests their readiness to move on to the world of marriage. Hippolytus' attempt to restrict it to those whose purity is permanent would thus jar with any alert listener.⁶⁸ Additionally, the fact that flower-picking in myth is so often a prelude to violence, and in particular rape, introduces an anticipation of danger, which is borne out by the ending of the play.⁶⁹ Hippolytus' failure to go through the process of human maturation ends in disaster, and his being torn apart actualizes physical violation of the most extreme kind.

⁶⁸ The *locus classicus* is Archil. fr. 196a W, where the encounter takes place in a meadow, and the imagery associated with the meadow is allowed to creep into that associated with the erotic, thus blurring the boundaries of the metaphors.

⁶⁹ For flower-picking and rape, *HHDem.* 4–18; Eur. *Ion* 887–96, *Hel.* 244–9.

From this speech, then, an audience steeped in the poetic tradition would have recognized that Hippolytus' vision of the uncut meadow is highly problematic. Hippolytus tries to transform an erotic symbol into something chaste, yet the futility of this attempt is highlighted by the leaking of erotic elements into his description.⁷⁰ The meadow speech thus sets up the way that Hippolytus' attitude to sexuality is depicted in the play, and affects our response to him. The third stasimon again evokes the tension between traditional expectations and Hippolytus' ideas by contrasting the girls' desire for Hippolytus with his desire for the wilderness and to weave garlands for Artemis.

'Never again': Hippolytus' appropriation of female hymenaeal motifs

The mention of girls and garlands in the third stasimon thus signals Hippolytus' troubled relationship to the codes of sexual behaviour and reminds us of how this has already been established in the play. The imagery elsewhere in the ode continues to expand on this. A final point worth noting about the uncut meadow is that by identifying with it, Hippolytus is appropriating the language of female sexual transition.⁷¹ The meadow as an erotic space is a distinctly female image—for example when Ibycus as a male speaker describes it, it is to convey his own exclusion from it (ἐμοὶ δ' ἔρος / οὐδεμίαν κατάκοιτος ὦραν, 6–7). And the identification of human fertility with the earth is limited to female fertility. If the wife is the ploughed earth, the husband is by implication the farmer or the plough itself.⁷² More generally, the issues associated with transition to sexual maturity tend to be connected with females: as we noted earlier, while men also undergo a transition, there is nothing to parallel the sharp cut-off between *parthenos* and *gunē*. The ideas associated with male transition, then, are more to do with assuming citizen responsibilities

⁷¹ See Cairns (1997) 55. We see a similar inversion of the *topos* in Theoc. 13, where Hylas, a young boy on the brink of manhood, goes to fetch water from a spring in an isolated meadow and is snatched away by nymphs.

⁷² According to the wording of the betrothal ceremony, the woman is given ἐπ' ἀρότω γνησίων παίδων: cf. e.g. Men. Dys. 844, Mis. 444, Pk. 1013–14, Sam. 727; Luc. Tim. 17; Chariton 3.2.2.3.

than a total change of status: after all, the *ephebeia* took place well after puberty. This oddity is brought out again in the third stasimon. The language of the chorus evokes not only *hymenaios* but specifically the language associated with the woman. In the poetic codes, Hippolytus has become the bride.

This reading casts more light onto the chorus's reference to Hippolytus' mother, who is called unfortunate because of her son's fate (1144–5). In 'logical' terms, this makes little sense, for Hippolytus' mother has been long dead, and has played no role in the play.⁷³ Meridor suggests that this reference implies mourning: rather than a lament for Hippolytus' exile, the ode becomes a *thrēnos* for his death.⁷⁴ However, while it is true that the disappointment of the mother's hopes is a conventional part of lamentation, the mother's role in wedding ritual is also crucial. The separation of the bride from her mother is one of the most striking *topoi* of marriage poetry. It is the poignant culmination of Hesperus' powers in Sappho 104ab V, and echoed in more dramatic terms by Catullus (62.20–2). Theocritus also refers to the separation of the bride from her mother when his chorus of girls tease Menelaus that if he is going to go to sleep already he should have left his bride with her mother (18.12–14). We know of the Roman custom of *raptio*, whereby the bridal procession symbolically snatched the bride from her mother.⁷⁵ Plutarch's *Lycurgus* provides evidence for a similar 'mock abduction' in Sparta (15), and Dionysius of Halicarnassus implies that abduction from the bride's friends and family was probably a motif in wedding ceremonies elsewhere in Greece too (2.30.5). This hypothesis is also backed up by iconographic evidence.⁷⁶ The 'threnodic' aspect to this motif is therefore one of the range of ways in which marriage

⁷³ Cf. Barrett (1964) on 1144–5.

⁷⁴ Meridor (1972) 235.

⁷⁵ Cf. Fest. 364 L, Macr. *Sat.* 1, 15, 21. Also see Fedeli (1983) 53.

⁷⁶ Sourvinou-Inwood (1973) 17–18 suggests that a similar custom took place at Locri and other Greek states; Jenkins (1983) suggests abduction as a wedding motif in Athens; Alexiou (1974) 120 gives modern Greek examples of plaintive exchanges between mother and daughter as part of the marriage ritual. The accumulation of this evidence leads me to wonder whether something similar to the *raptio* was in fact also a part of Greek wedding customs. For an anthropological perspective on rites of rape and capture see van Gennep (1960) 123, Radcliffe-Brown (1951) 20, and see Sourvinou-Inwood (1991) 65–70 for a more general account of violence and abduction representing marriage.

is construed as a type of death, common in many types of *rites de passage* and made particularly clear in Greek culture by the story of Persephone, whose marriage is literally a marriage to death.⁷⁷ Hippolytus is in fact on his way to his death, and hence in this case the threnodic aspect is appropriate, as in Antigone's lament about her 'marriage to death' (Soph. *Ant.* 813–16). Thus, the threnodic elements to the third stasimon further enhance the hymenaeal ones, by drawing on similar elements in the way marriage is spoken of.⁷⁸

The emphasis on Hippolytus leaving his home and homeland (1148–50) is also reminiscent of wedding ritual, with its focus on the bride's departure from her home and old life. Just as Helen's companions in Theocritus 18 dwell on the details of Helen's old life as a *parthenos*, and the locations from which she is now separated, here the Chorus refer to the haunts and activities from which Hippolytus is now debarred. As Hippolytus' departure from his father's home symbolically becomes an *ekdosis* (the departure of the bride from her father's house), the Charites are called upon as his escorts (1148–50). These goddesses have associations with marriage in any case, and the epithet *συζύγλαι* applied to them here strengthens this connection.⁷⁹ The Charites are described as escorting Hippolytus from his house (*πέμπετε τῶνδ' ἀπ' οἴκων*, 1150). The verb *πέμπω* often has the sense of 'convey home' or 'escort'. It is used in the *Odyssey* of a father sending his daughter to be a bride (4.5), and it is

⁷⁷ Cf. Seaford (1987) 106–7; Rehm (1994) 1–6. See van Gennep (1960) 116–45 for examples in different cultures.

⁷⁸ I disagree with Meridor (1972) 231 that the cessation of music at 1135–6 is incompatible with Hippolytus' character and thus needs special explanation as a threnodic element. The most obvious interpretation is that it is Hippolytus' own musical performance which will cease in the house, and so it is a general statement about what life in the house will be like without him (just like the absence of horse-training and offerings to Artemis). Musical performance is considered as much a part of young male aristocratic lifestyle as hunting—in fact Hippolytus leads the lyric song for Artemis at the start of the play (58–60).

⁷⁹ See the scholiast *ad loc.* Bushala (1969) 23–9 discusses the implications of the epithet and suggests a connection to the wider importance of marriage in the play. Halleran (1991) 120 and Burnett (1986) 173–4 note the marriage connotations of the address to the Charites here.

language more suitable for a socially sanctioned procession than for an ignominious departure into exile.

The epode builds up a sense of Hippolytus' wretchedness with series of words referring to his bad luck, and that of others associated with him (*δυστυχία* 1141, *ἄποτμον*, *τάλαινα* 1145, *τάλαν* 1148). As we have seen, one of the central pieces of wedding ritual was the *makarismos*, where the bridal couple are called 'blessed' for the first time. As Halleran notes, the *makarismos* is often manipulated by tragedy.⁸⁰ While marriage itself is often presented as a source of ambiguity and concern for the bride, it is also a cause for joy and celebration; thus the *makarismos* counters the darker strands we also find surrounding wedding poetry. However, whereas the real *makarismos* describes the *ekdosis* as bringing about luck and happiness, its tragic counterpart describes Hippolytus' departure as causing and being caused by misfortune and unhappiness.

Having established these references to *hymenaios*, let us look again at the way Hippolytus is presented when the idea of his departure is introduced at the very start of the second strophe. The chorus introduce Hippolytus with a striking metaphor, calling him the *Ἑλλανίας φανερώτατον ἀστέρ* *Ἀφαίας* (1123). As Halleran notes, while referring to a person as a light (*φέγγος* or *φάος*) is reasonably common, calling someone a star is unique in pre-Hellenistic literature.⁸¹ A comparison to a star or other astral body, however, is by no means unique, and it is often used to describe female desirability. The point of the comparison is usually that the desired object eclipses all others, just as Hippolytus here is the brightest of all stars. For example, Sappho fr. 96 V (which may be about a girl's marriage) describes a girl as being like the moon surpassing the other stars (*ὥς ποτ' ἀελίῳ / δύντος ἂ βροδοδάκτυλος <σελάννα> / πάντα περ<ρ>έχοισ' ἄστρα*, 7–9), an image which is also echoed at fr. 34 V (*ἄστερες μὲν ἀμφι κάλαν σελάνναν / ἄψ ἀπυκρύπτοισι φάεννον εἶδος / ὅπποτα πλήθοισα μάλιστα λάμπη*, 1–3). Similarly at Alcman fr. 1

⁸⁰ Halleran (1991) 114, where he also suggests an allusion to the *makarismos* at *Hipp.* 525–64. For other cases of a manipulated or parodied *makarismos* in tragedy, he cites Eur. *Alc.* 918–19, *Andr.* 1218, *Suppl.* 995–9, *Hel.* 639–40, *IA* 1076–9, *Phaeth.* 240–4 (Diggle), and *Tro.* 308 ff.

⁸¹ Halleran (1995) on 1123.

PMGF, Agido's desirability is conveyed through the imagery of light (ἐγὼν δ' αἶδω / Ἀγιδῶς τὸ φῶς, 39–40); she is then compared to the light of the sun as part of a series of images meant to convey how she and Hagesichora surpass the other girls. We find an equivalent at Alcman 3 where Astymeloisa's beauty is expressed by comparing her to a star ([ὦ] τις αἰγλά[ε]ντος ἀστήρ / ὠρανῶ διαίπετής, 66–7). This imagery is not strictly hymenaeal; however, it conveys associations of unmarried female desirability which enhance the presentation of Hippolytus as a *parthenos* ripe for marriage rather than the hunter sworn to chastity he actually is.

Challenging identities: wider implications of the third stasimon

The third stasimon thus alludes to *hymenaios* both in the details of its performance and in the ode's language and imagery. The hymenaeal language ties in with the play's broader concerns, for it is precisely Hippolytus' inability to achieve a *hymenaios* which will bring about his destruction. Thus singing an ode reminiscent of *hymenaios* at the moment at which Hippolytus is sent into exile is not only poignant, but reminds us of the reasons for Hippolytus' fate. The traditional 'marriage-to-death' motif enhances the ode's effect, for Hippolytus' death (which the audience realizes his departure means) is spoken of in terms reminiscent of a marriage.

As we have seen, Hippolytus' appropriation of the language of female sexuality is already suggested by the 'uncut meadow' speech, to which the third stasimon points us back. However, the ode's references to Hippolytus' archetypal male activities also point us back to another moment in the play which suggests the way gender codes and boundaries are becoming blurred. At 198–266, Phaedra's ravings express her desire to be with Hippolytus and to take part in his lifestyle. In particular she mentions wanting to hunt with dogs (ἐραμαι κυσὶ θωύξαι, 219), wanting to drive Enetic horses around the Limna (εἴθε γενοίμαν ἐν σοῖς δαπέδοις / πώλους Ἐνετὰς δαμαλιζομένα, 230–1), and resting places in the wilderness (ἀναπαυσαίμαν, 211), all of which are strongly echoed in the third stasimon. The Nurse sees Phaedra's comments as puzzling but

inappropriate, presumably because Phaedra is expressing desires for activities which are unsuitable for women, and so, like Hippolytus, is disrupting the normal gender boundaries.⁸² However, Phaedra's comments also serve to re-eroticize the meadows and the wilderness, and turn it from the pure space Hippolytus envisages into a place where sexual desires can be fulfilled.⁸³ Phaedra's 'male' desires thus counterbalance Hippolytus' portrayal as a *parthenos*, underscoring how each character presents an attitude to sexuality which is inappropriate and problematic.

Hippolytus and Phaedra, then, both present a model of the wilderness which expresses their own problematic relationship to the social codes by which they should abide. We also find a third, and more positive, view of the wilderness in the second stasimon, where the Chorus imagine going to the garden of the Hesperides, the location of the wedding of Zeus and Hera (742–51). Like Hippolytus' meadow, the garden is a secluded place, not accessible to ordinary mortals. However, whereas Hippolytus' meadow was a place of chastity, the garden of the Hesperides is an erotic location which commemorates the Hieros Gamos (*Ζηνὸς παρὰ κοίταις*, 749). The Chorus thus normalize the wilderness imagery, and in doing so present a 'middle way' between Phaedra's inappropriate lust and Hippolytus' inappropriate chastity. Their ode envisages a return to the original model for sexual union: a natural and uncomplicated form of sexuality.⁸⁴ However, within the world of the play, this positive model is limited to an unattainable choral fantasy, while the main action demonstrates the disastrous consequences of mis-managed sexuality.

The contention over the meaning of the wilderness, then, lies at the heart of the play, and is used to stand for the different attitudes to sexual maturity we find expressed. By the end of the play the hymeneal imagery of the third stasimon has led us to re-evaluate this

⁸² Hence her comment that Phaedra should drink at the well near the city, where she as a married woman belongs, rather than in the wilderness from which she is precluded and which is a dangerous place for a woman to be. See Segal (1965) 124–5; Goff (1990) 31–4; Rabinowitz (1993) 162 on the erotic overtones of the scene and on the way it is used to construct gender roles.

⁸³ See Halleran on 73–87 and 208–11.

⁸⁴ See Padel (1974) 232–3; Swift (2009) pp. 369–71.

imagery. Hippolytus' wilderness seems once again pure by virtue of the fact that it is construed as though it represented the pre-marital activities of the bride. However, the purity of the wilderness is derived from Hippolytus' own absence from it: a parallel to the way Theocritus' chorus contrasts their own girlish activities with Helen's new married life (18.38–42). Hippolytus' meadow has in fact become realigned to the poetic norms of the meadow (a liminal zone where purity can become sexualized) rather than the permanent chastity Hippolytus envisages. Hippolytus may remain sexually chaste, but his exile and violent death are portrayed as the victory of Aphrodite over Artemis.

The tragic action of the play is driven by Hippolytus and Phaedra's inability to behave as the norms of their roles in society demand, and specifically Hippolytus' inability to become reconciled to adult male sexuality. Hippolytus' role as a hunter has been described as symbolic of his status as a young man who has not yet become integrated into the community—an insightful observation into the way social rituals work within the play.⁸⁵ However, the strand of imagery set out here casts a different and complementary light on Hippolytus' sexuality. Through the codes of erotic and hymenaeal poetry, he is presented as though he were a female *parthenos* who wants to stay in the wilderness, but as the hunted rather than the hunter.⁸⁶ This is common imagery to apply to unmarried girls, but its application here resonates with Hippolytus' sexual identity in a way which is both surprising and illuminating. Applying female motifs to Hippolytus is a startling device; however, it also casts light on his characterization. Hippolytus is someone who cannot accept the reality of his own sexuality, and whose ultimate reconciliation to it is brought about through the actions of unmarried girls rather than boys (1423–30).⁸⁷ The use of wedding language in the third stasimon is particularly

⁸⁵ Burnett (1986) 167–9; Vidal-Naquet (1968) 60–1 on the meaning of the hunting motif; see Mitchell-Boyask (1999) on Hippolytus as an ephebe.

⁸⁶ Cf. the common *topos* of the *parthenos* who rejects sexual attentions and instead is transformed into a wild animal. At Eur. *Hel.* 375–85 Helen lists some of these *parthenoi* and expresses envy for them: see p. 00 above for the significance of this motif.

⁸⁷ Cf. Cairns (1997) 69. A male deity's involvement in female transition ritual is unusual in itself. Pausanias (1.43.4) mentions hair-cutting rites as part of female

poignant. The bride's transition to her new married status is construed as difficult and potentially even traumatic, and can be portrayed as a kind of death. However, it is also a transition to a new life in which she will fulfil her role in and responsibilities to the community. Hippolytus' position is exactly the opposite. His traumatic and devastating departure from his home is portrayed in terms which suggest a transition to a new life. But it is precisely because Hippolytus is unable to make this transition that he meets with catastrophe.

The mixed chorus in *Hippolytus*, then, far from being something which needs to be explained away, is in fact connected with central themes of the play. By its very nature it alludes to and develops those themes. Mixed choral performance itself comes with automatic associations: a focus on gender roles, the relationship between male and female, and associations with marriage rituals. These associations are further enhanced by the language the Chorus in *Hippolytus* uses, which draws on the *topoi* of wedding songs.

AESCHYLUS' SUPPLIANT WOMEN

If marriage is of central importance to *Hippolytus* it is because of what it symbolizes and the light it casts on Hippolytus' attitudes. Marriage is of much more direct and tangible relevance to the plot of Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women*, for it is the Danaids' refusal to marry that drives the action of the play. The reasons for their reluctance are disputed, since the text does not make clear whether it stems from a general distaste for marriage, or from a specific objection to marrying their relatives. However, as Seaford points out, looking to the symbolism of marriage ritual in the play can cast more light on the portrayal of the Danaids. Seaford suggests that their attitude

transitions, but the recipients are female. A counter-example might seem to be the ritual prayer to the Scamandrus by girls in the Troad to take their virginity ([Aeschines] *Epist.* 10.3–5). However, in the Scamandrus story, Scamandrus' masculinity is deliberately sexualized: he is presented as a sexual partner for the girls as they reach maturity. The worship of Hippolytus, conversely, is a lament, and focuses on his premature death before achieving marriage.

represents the extremes to which conventionally female attitudes to marriage could in theory be taken.⁸⁸ The language the Danaids use evokes the normal *topoi* of wedding poetry, and so links their attitudes to a long-established tradition. *Suppliant Women*, then, takes the female anxieties about marriage which are embedded in the ritual language used of it, and pushes it to an extreme, with bloody consequences.

As in *Hippolytus*, these traditional *topoi* are not simply evoked in linguistic echoes but also in the staging, for the final song of the play has a good claim to being another mixed chorus.⁸⁹ Once again, literary *topoi* and practical staging work together to create a powerful hymenaeal association.

The mixed chorus

Suppliant Women ends as Danaus brings the news that Argos has decided to accept him and his daughters into their community. In the closing lines of the play, the Danaids leave the stage, singing a song which praises their new *polis* and reaffirms their desire to remain unmarried. It is generally agreed that this *exodos* is divided between two choruses.⁹⁰ The third strophic pair is an altercation between two choral groups, and the existence of the separate group is confirmed when the Danaids invite a group of ὀπαδοί (attendants) to take over the song (ὑποδέξασθε δ' ὀπαδοὶ / μέλος, 1022).⁹¹ What has been more contentious is the identity, and hence the gender, of this chorus.

The traditional reading of the scene has been to assign the second chorus to the group of handmaidens named at 977–9. However, if the maids are a chorus, rather than silent extras, we encounter serious

⁸⁸ Seaford (1987) 110–14. See also Winnington-Ingram (1961).

⁸⁹ Seaford (1987) 114–15.

⁹⁰ Taplin (1977) 230–8; Friis Johansen and Whittle (1980) on 1018–73.

⁹¹ I disagree with McCall (1976) that the phrase need not imply that the group of ὀπαδοί actually sings in the play: the phrase is as clear an indication that we could hope for that the song is taken over by another group. It is linguistically similar to the way that Hippolytus invites his companions to follow and sing of Artemis (Eur. *Hipp.* 58–60) and considerably clearer than the situation in Aesch. *Eum.*, where the chorus is introduced but we are not explicitly told that they are going to sing rather than be silent extras (1021–31).

issues with staging. Taplin's investigation of how secondary choruses operate in tragedy outlines a series of conventions. A secondary chorus normally accompanies an actor (to whom it is linked), is clearly announced on entry, including an explanation of its presence, and usually enters shortly before it sings.⁹² At 977–9, the maids are addressed rather than formally announced, which suggests either that they are already on-stage, or that their entry is meant to be inconspicuous. As there is no other plausible point in the play for the maids to enter, if they are already in place, they must have been there for the whole of the play.

We should assume that the semi-chorus which sings in the *exodos* is the same size as the main Chorus: we certainly have no evidence for two hemi-choruses of uneven sizes. In this case, we would have to envisage a secondary chorus, equal in size to the main one, in silence in the orchestra for almost the entirety of the play. Secondary choruses are normally associated with actors: it would be bizarre, therefore, as well as logistically and dramatically difficult, to find a tragic chorus which comes with its own secondary chorus. On the other hand, if the maids only appear at 977, it is still 40 lines before their song. Additionally, their entry would come at a point in the play where a quick scene change is needed between the Pelasgus and the Danaus scenes, and the arrival of an additional chorus would make the staging more confusing.

However, there is no particular reason to identify the *παῖδες* with the maids, and the word is no more likely to refer to females than to males: indeed the word has already been used in *Suppliant Women* to refer to men (985), as has its Homeric equivalent *παῖδες* (492).⁹³ If the secondary chorus consisted of the Argive bodyguards, it would fit the normal staging conventions considerably better. The Argives

⁹² We have definite evidence for the entrances of six secondary choruses in tragedy: Aesch. *Eum.* 1032; Eur. *Hipp.* 58, *Suppl.* 1114, *Phaeth.* 227, and *Alex.* and *Antiope* (mentioned by the scholiast on *Hipp.* 58). All these are clearly identified and their presence explained, all but Eur. *Suppl.* and Aesch. *Eum.* accompany an actor and are announced on entry, and all but Eur. *Suppl.* and possibly Aesch. *Eum.* enter shortly before they sing. See Taplin (1977) 235–7 for a more detailed analysis.

⁹³ See McCall (1976) 120–3 on the problems with taking the *παῖδες* to be the maids.

accompany an actor (Danaus), are introduced (985), and they enter shortly before their song. The sole function of the secondary chorus is to sing the *exodos*: it is therefore more satisfactory to have them introduced neatly at this point than to have them introduced at the start of the play, or in a confused fashion at a random point some time before they are needed.

For the staging of this passage, then, the case for the second chorus consisting of males is considerably stronger. However, as in *Hippolytus*, the chorus of the *exodos* is not just coincidentally mixed-sex: rather, the associations of the mixed-sex chorus feed into and enrich the hymenaeal theme of the passage and of the play as a whole.⁹⁴

Hymenaeal allusions

The form of the *exodos*, with its two contrasting groups, echoes the theme of different alignments between male and female groupings which we have seen in the *Lysistrata* and in Catullus 62. Here too, the contrast between the sexes is brought out by a tension in the views they espouse. And as in the Catullus poem, the male group advocates the importance of marriage, while the female group rejects marriage.

The Danaids begin the song by reaffirming their intention to follow their father's advice and protect their virginity. Shortly before the *exodos*, Danaus warned his daughters to protect their virginity (996–1013), using language which evokes the types of imagery used in *hymenaios*. Danaus describes female virginity as a fruit in a protected place, constantly under threat from male outsiders (τέρευν' ὀπώρα δ' εὐφύλακτος οὐδαμῶς, 998), drawing on the *topos* of natural fertility representing human marriage which dates back to the earliest

⁹⁴ McCall (1976) 124 argues that a debate between the main chorus and a secondary chorus would be inappropriate. However, his objections to the aesthetic and poetic effects of the bodyguard chorus overlook the symbolism that a mixed-sex chorus held, which provides a positive motivation for the bodyguards here. In addition, it seems equally if not more inappropriate for half of the Danaids to attempt to persuade their sisters to marry, a reading which not only conflicts with their presentation earlier in the play but also sits oddly with the rest of the trilogy which relies on Hypermetra's exceptionalism in sparing her husband.

Greek poetry.⁹⁵ The Danaids pick up this motif in the interchange which follows, repeating the word *ὀπώρα* (*ἐμῆς δ' ὀπώρας οὐνέκ' εἶθ' θάρσει, πάτερ*, 'take confidence about my fruit, father', 1015). Thus a link is created between what they say and their father's train of thought. However, the way the motif is deployed, both by Danaus and by his daughters, is subtly different from its normal meaning. The image of virginity as a fruit or flower in need of protection usually emphasizes the importance that it be lost in the correct circumstances—that is, legitimate marriage. Thus the speaker in Archilochus fr. 196a W describes Neoboule as overripe (*πέπειρα*, 17) and claims that her 'maiden flower' has gone because of her sexual incontinence (*ἄν]θος δ' ἀπερρύηκε παρθενήϊον / κ]αι χάρις ἥ πρὶν ἐπῆν· κόρον γὰρ οὐ κ[ατέσχε πω*, 18–19). Similarly, Sappho fr. 105a V compares a girl to an apple out of reach of the pickers, while fr. 105b V by contrast describes a hyacinth trampled by passing shepherds, presumably as a moral about a girl who did not maintain her chastity. Catullus 62 makes the *topos* particularly clear, as his chorus of girls praise the girl who maintains her virginity like a flower in a protected garden, and claim that once virginity has been lost a girl is no longer desirable (39–48). Superficially, then, Danaus and his daughters appear to follow this traditional line as Danaus reminds his daughters of the importance of protecting their virginity. However, whereas the usual reason for guarding virginity is to ensure marriageability, in the case of the Danaids it is used as an argument for rejecting marriage altogether. Their remarks do not represent healthy caution about protecting their virtue, but rather a dangerous refusal to accept their natural role as future wives. Indeed, the misuse of this strand of imagery has been foreshadowed at the start of the play as the Danaids use the motif of flower-picking in order to describe their anxiety (*γοεδνὰ δ' ἀνθεμίζομαι*, 'I pluck the flowers of lament', 72). Thus the Danaids' assurance to their father that they will take due care of their virginity might appear to be the normal

⁹⁵ As Ryzman (1989) 4 notes, Danaus continues to urge his daughters not to marry even after they have been guaranteed protection from the Egyptians; this suggests that the objections to marriage cannot simply be explained as a dislike of the particular marriage on offer.

attitude of well-behaved *parthenoi*, but the audience is aware that it will in fact be used as a justification for the murder of their husbands.

We see a similar misuse of conventional motifs in the lyric passage which follows. The *exodos* begins with praise of Argos, and the switching of the Danaids' loyalties from Egypt to their new city. But at the end of the stanza, the Chorus again confirm their dedication to virginity, asking Artemis for protection against Aphrodite:

ἴτε μὲν ἀστυάνακτας
 μάκαρας θεοὺς γανάνοντες
 πολιούχους τε καὶ οἱ χεῦμ' Ἐρασίνου
 περιναίουσιν παλαιόν·
 ὑποδέξασθε δ' ὁπαδοὶ
 μέλος, αἶνος δὲ πόλιν τάνδε Πελασγῶν
 ἐχέτω, μῆδ' ἔτι Νείλου
 προχοᾶς σέβωμεν ὕμνοις,
 ποταμούς δ' οἱ διὰ χώρας
 θελεμὸν πῶμα χέουσιν
 πολύτεκνοι λιπαροῖς χεύμασι γαίης
 τόδε μειλίσσοντες οὐδας.
 ἐπίδοι δ' Ἄρτεμις ἀγνὰ
 στόλον οἰκτιζομένα, μῆδ' ὑπ' ἀνάγκας
 γάμος ἔλθοι· Κυthereαίαι
 στυγερὸν πέλοι τόδ' ἄθλον. (1018–33)

Come away now, praising the blessed gods who are lords of this town, those who guard the city and those that dwell around the ancient stream of Erasinus. And you attendants take up the song. Let it be this city of the Pelasgians which receives our praise, and no longer let us honour the floods of the Nile with our songs, but rather the rivers that grant many children, which pour their soothing drink through the land, soothing its soil with their shining streams. May holy Artemis look upon this band with pity, and may marriage never come through necessity. May that prize of Cytherea befall those I hate.

On the surface, the chorus's praise of Argos and rejection of Egypt seems to require no further explanation. Now that they have been offered refuge, it is entirely appropriate for them to praise the land which is taking them in. On closer reading, however, there is a connection between the two motifs in the stanza, through the focus on the fertilizing waters of the rivers that identify the two cities.

Using a river to stand for a place is a common device of Greek poetry; here, however, the emphasis lies on the control the rivers have over fertility, and specifically over human fertility (πολύτεκνοι).⁹⁶ Flowing waters are a standard component of the erotic *locus amoenus*, and young women's sexuality is further connected to rivers by the tradition that the bride bathe in the waters of her native spring on the morning of the wedding day (see pp. 222 above). Here, then, we see a group of young women changing their sacred spring, and adopting a new one, which they praise for its powers of fertility. This image would carry symbolic associations in any case, but the link is strengthened by the previous encouragement to the audience to conceptualize female sexuality in terms of the *locus amoenus*. The explicit reference to marriage (1031–3), confirms this connection. The Danaids are behaving as *parthenoi* are expected to: they are wary about marriage and attempt to cling to their virginity.⁹⁷ However, because of our knowledge of the rest of the myth, what is normal behaviour for *parthenoi* takes on a darker tinge here. Indeed, this is confirmed by the Danaids' wording; whereas normally *parthenoi* reject extra-marital sexual relationships in order to protect their chastity for marriage, here the Chorus reject marriage wholesale, going as far as to call it a 'hateful prize' (στυγερόν ἄθλον, 1033).⁹⁸ Their fear that marriage might come 'through necessity' (ὑπ' ἀνάγκας, 1031) on a literal level reflects the forced nature of their prospective marriage to their cousins, where neither they nor their father approves of the match. However, the phrasing could also be interpreted as the Danaids questioning the necessity of marriage, as they instead hope to remain under the protection of Artemis as perpetual virgins. The Danaids see marriage not as a natural goal for a woman, but as a source of pain, and go as far as to wish it on those they hate (1032–3), inverting the usual idea that making a good marriage is the *telos* of a woman's life. Yet the futility of their position

⁹⁶ Cf. Murray (1958) 83.

⁹⁷ Cf. Sappho fr. 107 and 114 V. For *parthenoi* rejecting male attention in general see Archil. fr. 23, 196a W; Anacreon fr. 417 PMGF.

⁹⁸ e.g. in Archil. fr. 196a9–10 W the speaker allays the girl's fears by promising her that he will avoid full sex (τὸ θεῖον χρεῖμα), while in HHaph. 131–42 Aphrodite, trying to seduce Anchises while posing as a mortal *parthenos*, suggests that Anchises marry her and he agrees to the marriage (148) before sleeping with her.

is implied by the epithet *πολύτεκνοι* (1028), for while they switch their allegiance in order to avoid marriage, the necessity of fertility is embedded in the description of the new land they praise.

The Argive bodyguards pick up the theme of the Danaids' unwillingness to marry and counter it, affirming the importance of Aphrodite and sexual love:

*Κύπριδος <δ> οὐκ ἀμελής ἐσμός ὃδ' εὐφρων,⁹⁹
 δύναται γὰρ Διὸς ἄγχιστα σὺν Ἡρᾷ,
 τίεται δ' αἰολόμητις
 θεὸς ἔργοις ἐπὶ σεμνοῖς·
 μετάκοινοι δὲ φίλα ματρὶ πάρεισιν
 Πόθος ᾧ τ' οὐδὲν ἄπαρνον
 τελέθει θέλκτορι Πειθοῖ·
 δέδοται δ' Ἀρμονία μοῖρ' Ἀφροδίτας
 †ψευδρὰ τρίβοι τ'† Ἐρώτων.* (1034–42)

This well-intentioned group does not disdain Cypris, for she, along with Hera, has the power closest to Zeus, and the goddess of various wiles is honoured for her sacred rites. Alongside their dear mother are Desire and charming Persuasion, she to whom nothing is denied. And a share in the power of Aphrodite has been given to Harmonia, and the whispering dalliances of the Loves.

As we have seen elsewhere, the male and female choruses are set up in opposition, picking up on each other's language in order to cap it. When the Danaids reject Aphrodite in favour of Artemis, the Argives respond with specific praise of Aphrodite; while the Danaids call Artemis 'pure' (*ἀγνὰ*, 1030) the bodyguards respond by explaining that Aphrodite too deserves honour for her 'sacred rites' (*ἔργοις ἐπὶ σεμνοῖς*, 1037).¹⁰⁰ Aphrodite is singled out as the deity who, along-

⁹⁹ Nauck's emendation (also printed by West) of 1034 to read *ἀμελεῖν*, *θεσμός* would in fact suit my argument even better here, since *θεσμός* emphasizes the idea that marriage is morally required.

¹⁰⁰ *ἀγνός* can have connotations of purity and virginity; thus in Homer it is used as an epithet of Artemis and Persephone (*Od.* 5.123, 11.386, 18.202, 20.71). Similarly, it is also applied to young girls, to mean 'undefiled': cf. e.g. *Men. Epitr.* 436–41, where Habrotonon, complaining about the lack of sexual attention Chairestratus is paying her, sarcastically describes herself as a suitable candidate to be a *kanēphoros*, and calls herself *ἀγνή γάμων* (440); cf. also *Pl. Laws* 8.840d (of young men).

side Hera, holds the greatest power of all, and is second only to Zeus. This recalls the conventional poetic *topoi* about the universal power of *eros*, and in particular the opening of the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, where the goddess is said to have power over all gods and men except for the three goddesses who have been granted the right to be perpetual virgins (1–44). Mentioning Hera alongside Aphrodite suggests sexual desire expressed through marriage, and the Hieros Gamos, the prototype of marriage, which in the *Iliad* Hera is only able to achieve with Aphrodite's help (Hom. *Il.* 14.188–213). The other divinities named are also associated with marriage and sexuality. Against the Danaids' description of marriage as *στυγερός* the Argives paint a more appealing picture, emphasizing the attractive aspects of Aphrodite's powers. The mention of Persuasion and Harmony stands in contrast to the Danaids' vision of a marriage occurring under duress, instead portraying sexual union as a positive experience. The Argives' praise of Aphrodite, then, is not merely formal piety, but a direct challenge to the views on marriage expressed by the Danaids.

The Argives move on from the idea of marriage in general to the particular marriage which has prompted the Danaids to flee. They express fear for the girls, and hint that their marriage may be inescapable:

φυγάδεσσιν δ' ἔτι ποινάς κακά τ' ἄλγη
πολέμους θ' αἵματόεντας προφοβοῦμαι·
τί ποτ' εὐπλοῖαν ἔπραξαν
ταχυπόμοισι διωγμοῖς;
ὃ τί τοι μόρσιμόν ἐστιν, τὸ γένοιτ' ἄν·
Διὸς οὐ παρβατός ἐστιν
μεγάλα φρὴν ἀπέρατος.
μετὰ πολλῶν δὲ γάμων ἄδε τελευτὰ
προτερᾶν πέλει γυναικῶν. (1043–51)

But for the fugitives I fear vengeance and wretched grief and bloody wars. What good is the fair voyage they made when they are pursued with such a swift sailing? May what is fated come to pass. It is not possible to transgress against the great unassailable mind of Zeus. The outcome of this is marriage, just as it has been for many women before now.

The focus moves from the human level to the divine, with the implication that Aegyptus' sons are carrying out the broader desire of Zeus. Zeus is now portrayed as upholder of the status quo, whereas the Danaids earlier called upon him as their protector (1, 86, 175, 206, 210, 524–37, 590–4, 815–16). The Argives present marriage as part of Zeus' will, and so something which cannot be resisted. Marriage is a woman's destiny and the Danaids are misguided in their desire to escape it.¹⁰¹ Hence the Argives not only predict the failure of the Danaids' plan but also go as far as to hope for this failure in their expectation that what is fated should come to pass (*ὁ τί τοι μόρσιμόν ἐστιν, τὸ γένοιτ' ἄν*, 1047). In 'logical' terms we might see this as an attempt to persuade the Danaids to accept their marriage, so that the Argives' community will not be endangered by their obligation to protect them. However, on a more symbolic level the Argives represent the male perspective which affirms the correctness and necessity of marriage; as such they wish for the fated outcome, which will confirm the role of marriage in a woman's life.

The remainder of the *exodos* consists of argument between the two choral groups, continuing the banter form whereby the female chorus express the 'women's view', while the male chorus advocate the opposite.¹⁰² The Danaids continue to express a typical parthenaic unwillingness to marry, and refuse to accept that marriage is ordained by Zeus, or part of the natural order (*ὁ μέγας Ζεὺς ἀπαλέξει / γάμον Αἰγυπτογενῇ μοι*, 1052–3). The men respond by continuing to suggest that marriage is predestined (*τὸ μὲν ἄν βέλτατον εἴη, / σὺ δὲ θέλγοις ἄν ἄθελκτον*, 1054–5) and that the Danaids' wish to avoid it is inappropriate (*τὰ θεῶν μηδὲν ἀγάζειν*, 1061). The Danaids' insistence that Zeus will help them escape marriage is brought out in their plea to treat them as he did Io (1062–9). The Danaids focus on Zeus' rescue of Io, but the audience knows that Zeus' relationship to her is considerably more complicated than this *exemplum* would suggest. The Chorus have used Io as a paradigm throughout the play, beginning from their opening lines (40–56).¹⁰³ Io is introduced partly to explain their racial links to Argos and hence justify their request for

¹⁰¹ Cf. Seaford (1987) 114.

¹⁰² I follow Page's OCT in the allocation of the lines.

¹⁰³ See Murray (1958) for a detailed treatment of the Io theme.

help (*Ἀργεῖαι γένος / ἐξευχόμεσθα, σπέρματ' εὐτέκνου βοός*, 'we claim to be of Argive race, the seed of the cow with her fine offspring', 274–5). However, the Chorus also see Io as a model for a *parthenos* who sought to avoid marriage, and so assimilate themselves with her. In the opening scene they pray to Zeus and Artemis that because of their descent from Io they may escape marriage:

σπέρμα σεμνᾶς μέγα ματρὸς εὐνὰς
ἀνδρῶν, ἔ' ἔ',
ἄγαμον ἀδάματον ἐκφυγεῖν. (141–3=151–3)

[we pray] that we, the mighty offspring of our holy mother, may escape the bed of men—ah, ah—without marriage and untamed.

Similarly they portray their journey to Argos as a return to their origins, since they occupy the same meadows Io grazed long ago (538–42), and they describe Io's suffering and eventual rescue by Zeus as analogous to their own situation (538–89). However, even as they cite their relationship to Io, they allude to the inevitability of her transition from *parthenos* to mother (*λαβοῦσα δ' ἔρμα Δίον ἀψευδεὶ λόγῳ / γείνατο παῖδ' ἀμεμφή*, 'taking Zeus as her support, as the true story goes, she bore him a peerless son', 580–1). For as they acknowledge, Io's predicament was caused by Zeus' sexual desire for her, and Hera's sexual jealousy (162–6, 291–315). Zeus did release Io from her suffering, but simultaneously begat a child with his touch (45–6, 313).¹⁰⁴ Thus Io's release came as a result of her acceptance of Zeus' sexual authority and her conception of his child. So by invoking Io the Chorus also remind their listeners that the sexualization of *parthenoi* is something inevitable and sanctioned by the divine order. The request for Zeus' protection in the *exodos* (1052–3) suggests how unlikely this protection is, just as using Io as a prototype for a *parthenos* who avoids marriage demonstrates the futility of such avoidance.

The mixed choral performance at the end of *Suppliant Women*, then, also draws on the *topoi* associated with marriage songs: in particular, the 'capping' between the two choruses, and female lack of desire to marry set against male assurances that marriage is

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Caldwell (1974) 61.

necessary. Sommerstein notes this motif in his analysis of the passage, and comments that ‘men who tell girls that they are setting too high a value on virginity commonly have an ulterior motive’.¹⁰⁵ Friis Johansen and Whittle criticize this analysis.¹⁰⁶ But while they are right that the bodyguards have no sexual intentions towards the Danaids (indeed they are meant to be preserving their virginity), the sexual frisson that Sommerstein notes is nevertheless an important undertone in the text. Rather than relating to the desires of the singers, it operates as a cultural *topos*, encouraging us to reassess the Danaids’ attitude. The bodyguards are not themselves men with an ulterior motive, but they represent what is typically the men’s view in a choral interaction on the subject of marriage, and so uphold the social norms. While the Danaids’ reluctance to marry appears similar to the traditional attitude taken by *parthenoi*, in fact their behaviour is far from traditional, and their later story serves to demonstrate the destructive effects of allowing female sexuality to go unregulated by male authority.

Wider implications

The plot of *Suppliant Women* is precipitated by the Danaids’ refusal to marry, and as such the faux-*hymenaios* at the end fits in well with the broader themes of the play. But the hymenaeal imagery in the *exodos* also casts new light on what we have already seen. Young girls in Greek poetry traditionally express anxiety about marriage, but this reluctance is expressed in a context when a marriage is actually about to happen. Any possible threat to societal norms such anxieties might pose is therefore undermined by the fact it is uttered in a hymenaeal setting, and so no serious doubt is cast on the necessity of marriage. For the Danaids this model is rather more complicated. The *hymenaios* at the end is given following the Argives’ decision to protect the Danaids from the risk of marriage: its context is therefore the opposite of what it should be, and so validates the Danaids’ unwillingness to marry.

¹⁰⁵ Sommerstein (1977) 76.

¹⁰⁶ Friis Johansen and Whittle (1980) 306–8.

However, the audience knows the myth of the Danaids, and so knows that their resistance is ultimately just as futile as the reluctance of any bride. The Danaids *will* get married, and the bodyguards are right that marriage is inevitable. However, whereas the normal bride will put aside her reluctance in order to take on her new status, we also know that the Danaids' hostility to marriage will endure and become crystallized into violence. The story of the Danaids, then, exemplifies the dangers of female reluctance to marry when pushed to the extreme. Unwillingness to marry becomes hostility towards men, which is then actualized as murder of husbands. Sexual relations can culminate in violence when not properly managed, and this is prefigured in the theme of violence which runs through the surviving play.¹⁰⁷ The suppliant branches which the Chorus carry are described as ἐγχειρίδια ('daggers', 22), foreshadowing the daggers they will use later on their husbands.¹⁰⁸ Pelasgus is well aware that helping the suppliants may bring destruction to his city (438–54), and the Danaids counter this with a threat of suicide (457–65), turning this into a violent act against the Argives with the threat of pollution such a deed would bring. The Danaids' constant wishes for death as a liberation from marriage (159–60, 465, 792–807) gain in resonance when we recall that death will indeed free them from marriage, but it will be through murder rather than suicide.¹⁰⁹

The violent potential of mismanaged sexual relationships is brought out particularly forcefully in the interchange between the Chorus and the Egyptian Herald at 836–910. Immediately before this scene the Danaids have once again stated their objection to marriage, threatening suicide in an inversion of the 'marriage-to-death' motif (790–807). In place of the figurative abduction from friends and family implicit in the wedding ritual, the Chorus face literal abduction, as the Egyptians attempt to drag them to the ships. The violence is further emphasized by the Herald's language, as he threatens to tear out the women's hair, goad them, and even decapitate them if

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Winnington-Ingram (1961) 141–2, who sees it as an example of how violence begets further violence as the Danaids are first victims and then perpetrators of violence.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Winnington-Ingram (1961) 148; Gantz (1978) 280.

¹⁰⁹ See Gantz (1978) for a detailed discussion of the way the murder of the Egyptoi is foreshadowed in the play.

they do not obey him (τιλμοὶ τιλμοὶ καὶ στιγμοί / πολυαίμων φόνιος / ἀποκοπὰ κρατός, 839–41). The sexual aspects of the imagery develop as the scene continues. The Chorus express their desire never to return to Egypt, once more characterized through the fertilizing effects of its river:

μήποτε πάλιν †ἴδοι†
 ἀλφεισίβοιον ὕδωρ,
 ἔνθεν ἀεξόμενον
 ζώφυτον αἶμα βροτοῖσι θάλλει. (854–7)

May I never again see the waters rich in oxen, which causes the blood of men to flourish as it rises and fertilizes.

Again the commonplace of identifying Egypt by the Nile is complicated by the sexual language with which it is described, focusing on natural and human growth. The river's epithet, ἀλφεισίβοιον, is particularly telling: although in literal terms it must refer to the raising of cattle made possible by the fertile land, it is also an adjective used of marriageable young girls who are deemed to be worth many cattle (Hom. *Il.* 18.593, *HHaph.* 119). Thus the Chorus's rejection of marriage is presented as inextricably linked to their rejection of Egypt. Conversely, the sexual overtones of the Herald's aggression is heightened as he not only continues his threats to drag the women by their hair (884, 909) but also threatens to rip off their clothes if they refuse to go with him (λακὶς χιτῶνος ἔργον οὐ κατοικτιεῖ, 904).

The undertones of rape and abduction further connect with the nexus of marriage associations in the play. Construing marriage as abduction is also a common motif in the imagery of the Greek wedding.¹¹⁰ Here the mock-violence fossilized in Greek wedding poetry is made real by the actual violence of the marriage the Egyptians seek, and the mock-fear the bride feels is magnified into the real terror of the Danaids. The fact that the Herald is accompanied by a group of (silent) followers means that the scene is visually similar to the *exodus*; again we see a debate between men and

¹¹⁰ See Sourvinou-Inwood (1973) 17–18 and (1991) 65–70; Jenkins (1983). For an anthropological perspective on rites of rape and capture see van Gennepe (1960) 123, Radcliffe-Brown (1951) 20.

women which makes use of the visual and linguistic cues that indicate a wedding.¹¹¹

In the light of this, we should examine more closely the Herald's comment on the war which will ensue, where he hopes for victory 'to the men': *εἴη δὲ νίκη καὶ κράτος τοῖς ἄρσεσιν* (951). Pelasgus interprets this as a slight on the manliness of the Argives, and responds that they too are men (952–3). But a clue that the Herald's words are not intended simply as bragging comes at the end of the play, where the Danaids use the same language in hoping for their escape from marriage, and in challenging the implication that marriage is the natural order: *καὶ κράτος νέμει γυναι-/ξύν* ('may [Zeus] give the power to the women', 1068–9). Pelasgus perhaps misinterprets what lies behind the Egyptian's words. The Herald seeks to portray the quarrel not as a war between men over the fate of a group of women, but as a conflict between men and women. The Argive bodyguards' words in the *exodos* thus suggest the futility of the role they are undertaking.

Thus in *Suppliant Women* we see conventional elements of wedding song evoked and undermined. The assimilation of human and natural fertility is raised by the standard comparison of virginity to a sheltered possession, yet in the case of the Danaids it is protected beyond due measure until it becomes just as problematic as promiscuity. The elements of anxiety and lamentation, which form part of the wedding ceremony, become actualized in the Danaids' willingness to die rather than to marry, and their repeated lamentation in the context of marriage. Moreover, the normal banter between male and female groupings is perverted into actual hostility. The Egyptians present a stance of actual aggression, thus conflating marriage and rape. Equally, while the audience may feel sympathy for the Danaids at this point in the play, as the trilogy develops it becomes increasingly clear that their fear of marriage goes beyond the normal reluctance of the *parthenos* into something much more unsettling.

¹¹¹ The question of whether the Herald or a chorus of Egyptians sing these lines is a vexed one and ultimately impossible to answer conclusively. I am inclined to agree with Taplin (1977) 215–18 on the problems of a chorus here and to assign the lines to the Herald. However, if there were another secondary chorus, it would only strengthen my argument here and make the parallels with the *exodos* scene more striking. For an outline of the debate and its bibliography, see Garvie (1969) 193.

The importance of the marriage theme to the rest of the trilogy is suggested by our most substantial fragment of the *Danaids*, seven lines from a speech by Aphrodite (fr. 44 Radt):

ἐρᾷ μὲν ἀγνὸς οὐρανὸς τρῶσαι χθόνα,
 ἔρως δὲ γαῖαν λαμβάνει γάμου τυχεῖν·
 ὄμβρος δ' ἀπ' εὐνάεντος οὐρανοῦ πεσὼν
 ἔκυσσε γαῖαν· ἥ δὲ τίκτεται βροτοῖς
 μῆλων τε βοσκὰς καὶ βίον Δημήτριον
 δένδρων τ' ὀπώραν· ἐκ νοτίζοντος γάμου
 τελεῖθ' ὅσ' ἔστι· τῶν δ' ἐγὼ παραίτιος

The holy sky desires to pierce the earth, while desire seizes the earth to achieve a marriage. Rain falls from the wedded sky and kisses the earth, and she gives birth to the food for the flocks of man and the means of living offered by Demeter and the fruit of the trees. All this is accomplished from this dewy marriage. And I am the cause of these things.

The lines affirm the goddess's power, and the importance of the uniting of male and female in the natural world. Sexual desire is presented as the underlying force behind all natural production, and so the factor which makes human existence possible. This union is fundamental to the creation of all living things, and hence it lies at the heart of the natural order. We see again the imagery of the erotic *locus amoenus*, with its emphasis on flowing water and the bountiful production of the earth. Yet rather than describing a particular sexual act, the imagery is widened to include the creation of the whole world, linking human sexuality with nature. Unlike the Danaids' obsessive protection of their ὀπώρα (1015), here we see the word used of a sexual act which is positive and enriching. Aphrodite emphasizes the desire of the female as well as the male for sexual union: the earth (female) and sky (male) both long equally for union with each other, reflected by the repetition of ἐρᾷ . . . ἔρως, and the balancing effect of the μὲν . . . δέ construction. Thus rather than the power struggle between male and female we saw in *Suppliant Women*, we are shown a harmonious and mutually beneficial relationship that can exist between the genders, where sexuality is a joyous rather than a frightening force. Thus we can see Aphrodite's speech as correcting the mistakes of *Suppliant Women* and reaffirming the importance of sexual love as a unifying rather than a divisive power.

Various scholars have regarded Aphrodite's statement as central to the themes of the trilogy as a whole.¹¹² For example, Sommerstein reconstructs *Danaids* as showing the Danaids reconciled to marriage through Aphrodite's words, and he suggests that the play ends in a wedding procession, evocative of the procession which ended *Suppliant Women*.¹¹³ If we accept that Aphrodite's affirmation of sexuality is central to the themes of the third play, we can also accept that the end of *Suppliant Women* is significant in its exposition of this theme. And if the third play ended with the Danaids becoming reconciled to marriage, the significance of the ending of *Suppliant Women* becomes more striking.¹¹⁴

The importance of finding a way in which women can become reconciled to marriage may have been the dominant theme of the trilogy. The dangers to society if such a way is not found are demonstrated by the sequence of violence and destruction which follow on from the Danaids' initial refusal to marry. The herald scene and the *exodos*, then, can be understood as embodying the same basic mistake in attitudes to marriage, played out in opposite ways. The model set up by traditional poetry involves female reconciliation to the idea of marriage. For example, in *Lysistrata*, the semi-chorus of women put aside their objections to the men and both groups become united into a single chorus (1014–42). In Catullus 62 the appearance of the bride puts an end to the wrangling between the choral groups, and the poem concludes with an emphasis on the agreement between male and female (the bride's two parents) that led to the wedding. In the herald scene of Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women*, the males are unable to overcome the women's objections to marriage, so fall back on physical violence instead. Similarly, at the end of the play, the women

¹¹² Winnington-Ingram (1961) 143–4 and Sommerstein (1996) 148–51 come to the conclusion that the trilogy ended with the Danaids being converted to marriage: see also von Fritz (1936); Wolff (1958) 136–9; Lesky (1956) 70.

¹¹³ Sommerstein (1996) 150.

¹¹⁴ Winnington-Ingram (1961) 144 suggests that the secondary chorus may also have been used for the bridal procession at the end of the *Aegyptoi* and at the end of the *Danaids*, when the Danaids are finally reconciled to marriage. In this case, the faux-hymenaios at the end of the *Supplices* becomes still more striking, for it is reflected first by a real but destructive hymenaios and finally by a real and beneficial one, making the hymenaeal chorus a unifying motif of the trilogy.

remain unwilling to marry, rather than becoming reconciled to the male view, and the last words in the play consist of their insistence that their delivery from marriage will constitute justice (καὶ δίκῃ δίκας ἔπε-/σθαι, 1071–2). With this breakdown in the relationship between the sexes, it is hardly surprising that the cycle of violence continues to escalate.

Conclusion

Both *Hippolytus* and *Suppliant Women* use the theme of marriage to demonstrate the disastrous consequences when individuals reject certain social norms. In both plays the central characters' attitude to marriage is flawed: Hippolytus and the Danaids behave as though they can be eternal *parthenoi* and reject the need to reach maturity. The disruption which can occur when individuals reject the values of society in this way is presented in its most extreme form: Hippolytus' attitude leads directly to his own violent death; the Danaids not only threaten the destruction of the community that attempts to shelter them but also bring about the death of the bridegrooms when the transition is forced upon them.

The plays emphasize the importance of passing through ritual moments correctly. We see a similar position to what we have already observed in *Helen* and *IT*, though played out in a different way. Whereas the previous two plays used the generic norms to demonstrate positive role-models, in these plays we see the same effect created by the opposite outcome. The deliberate perversion of the norms which we see in the language used by Hippolytus and the Danaids reinforces that they are wrong, and that the values inherent in *hymenaios* are right. The characters act as negative examples, demonstrating the extremes of violence and destruction to which violation of social conventions can lead.

The focus on the mixed chorus also highlights the role that visual and performative clues can play in evoking genres. For the audience, a reference to a lyric genre is a reference to a performed event and this kind of allusion would have been a particularly powerful one. The effectiveness of the mixed chorus also reinforces a valuable lesson about tragedy: namely, that the tragedians are prepared to alter

conventions and to borrow and adapt from other choral forms to achieve the best dramatic effect. Using a chorus which purports to be of mixed sex is a step beyond simply alluding to literary *topoi* and motifs. A performative feature such as this brings the allusion nearer to reality: for the audience, it is a little closer to seeing a *hymenaios* actually performed. Yet in order to achieve this effect, the poet (and presumably his *chorēgos*) have to make considerable efforts, for training and staging an additional chorus is a complicated endeavour, as well as an expensive one.¹¹⁵ It should therefore highlight for us the lesson which has already become clear from our exploration of generic echoes thus far: references to genres are something worth taking trouble over.

¹¹⁵ It seems most plausible that a secondary chorus would have been negotiated with the *chorēgos*, just as he also approved the costumes, training space, and in general the level of additional expenditure and effort spent on the production: see Wilson (2000) 86–94.

Thrēnos and Ritual Lament

Of all the ritual moments in Greek life, the funeral is probably the one for which we have most evidence. Many artefacts survive which give us an insight into funerary customs, from depictions on painted pottery to grave *stelai* and the monuments and inscriptions which adorned archaic tombs. Death and lamentation are major literary themes, and descriptions of funerals are important both in Homer and in tragedy. Yet despite this relative wealth of evidence, investigating the lyric *thrēnos* is a challenging task. A funeral (like a wedding) contained various forms of ritual song, and we have little reliable evidence which we can use to subdivide and categorize them. Whilst literary representations of lamentation are common, we possess few pieces of poetry which were actually used in historical funerals, and we must therefore attempt to separate literary convention from real-life practice. In addition, the picture is complicated by the changing nature of the Greek funeral over the archaic and classical period, and by the banning of certain traditional mourning practices. Whereas with other lyric genres we can usually proceed on the basis that a fifth-century audience would recognize cultural triggers we know of from earlier sources, tragedy's use of funerary material would have been considerably more politicized (for reasons which are discussed below). Looking for tragic allusions to the lyric *thrēnos* is therefore particularly difficult. Firstly, as we shall see, the conventions of tragic lamentation are very different from those that applied in the real world. Secondly, the paucity of evidence makes it hard to isolate features or motifs as specifically 'threnodic'. To get meaningful results, then, we need to broaden our approach from choral *thrēnos* to the range of media which deal with lamentation and to look more

generally for ways in which tragedy engages with and responds to real-life mourning practices.

THE GENRE

There are many Greek words denoting ritual lamentation, but it is the term *thrēnos* which is used as a genre-name. The concept of *thrēnos* as a formal genre certainly dates back to the classical period. The opening of Pindar's third *thrēnos* (fr. 128c 5–M) establishes the song as a formal category, comparing it to *paian* and *dithyrambos*:

Ἐν[τι μὲν χρυσαλακάτου τεκέων Λατοῦς ἀοιδαί
 ὦ[ρ]ιαι παιάνιδες· ἐντὶ [δὲ] καὶ
 θ[άλλοντος ἐκ κισσοῦ στεφάνων {ἐκ} Διο[νύ]σου
 β[ρομι<ο>παιόμεναι· τὸ δὲ κοίμισαν τρεῖς
 τ[έ]κεα] Καλλιόπας ὥς οἱ ταθὲν μνάμ' ἀποφθιμένων·
 ἃ μὲν εὐχέταν Λίνον αἴλινον ὕμνει,
 ἃ δ' Ὑμέναιον, <ὄν> ἐν γάμοισι χροῖζόμενον
 . . . κτον σύμπρωτον λάβεν,
 ἐσχάτοις ὕμνοισιν· ἃ δ' Ἰάλεμον ὠμοβόλῳ
 νοῦσῳ {ὄτι} πεδαθέντα σθένος.¹ (1–10)

There are *paian*-songs in their season for the children of Leto of the golden spindle, and there are Bromios-stricken songs from Dionysus' crown of flourishing ivy. But other songs put to sleep the three children of Calliope, as a memorial set out for the dead. The first sang a song of sorrow to prayerful Linos; the next sang to Hymenaios, whom . . . took with the last songs of all when he was first touched by marriage; the next sang to Ialemos, whose strength was fettered by a disease which attacks flesh.

The opening of the poem is a priamel, first listing the two other genres by the deities these songs honour before going on to contrast them with songs which commemorate a death. Thus *paian* is named as ἀοιδαί . . . παιάνιδες (1–2) and identified as the songs of 'the children of Leto of the golden spindle' (χρυσάλακάτου τεκέων Λατοῦς, 1), while *dithyrambos* is not given its genre-term but is

¹ I give here the text of Cannatà Fera (1990).

identified as belonging to Dionysus (3–4). The *thrēnos* is introduced in contrast to these two religious and civic songs, and given its own aetiology as the songs sung to mourn the deaths of the sons of Calliope: Linos, Hymenaios, and Ialemos (6–9). Thus the poem sets out the reason the genre came into existence, as well as explaining how it came to be divided into further subcategories. Moreover, this poem self-consciously presents itself as belonging to a particular genre, and proceeds to establish its position by recalling the genre's pedigree and by locating it with reference to other types of song.² Plato also names *thrēnos* as a lyric genre, including it alongside *hymnos*, *paian*, and *dithyrambos* in a discussion of how categories of song once considered distinct have now become mixed (*Laws* 3.700a–b3). In the post-classical period *thrēnos* retained its status as a formal genre, and formed one of the categories into which Pindar's poetry was organized, as well as featuring in the lists of grammarians (cf. Proclus, *Chrest. ap. Phot. Bibl.* 239.320a2).

We therefore have evidence that *thrēnos* was considered a genre as early as the fifth century. Our next step must be to establish what a fifth-century Greek would have understood by the term. Modern scholars agree that *thrēnos* represents the most formal category of funeral song, and refers to a professionally composed song rather than a personal or spontaneous expression of grief.³ On one level this is unsurprising, for any type of song formalized enough to be incorporated into lists of lyric genres must have involved crafted literary pieces composed by famous poets. On the other hand, this definition of the *thrēnos* suggests a fairly rigid distinction of a kind we do not see elsewhere in Greek lyric poetry. We know that Sappho composed *hymenaioi*, and we can assume that these were sophisticated literary constructions, but we also know that a much less organized form of singing could count as performing a *hymenaios*, and in the previous chapter I argued that the various forms of singing at a wedding fall under the broad category of 'hymenaeal song'.

² Cf. Cannatà Fera (1990) 137–44.

³ Cf. e.g. Reiner (1938) 8–9; Campbell (1982) xxii; Harvey (1955) 169; Alexiou (1974) 102–8; Nagy (1979) 112; Garland (1985) 30; Richardson (1985) 349–50; Cannatà Fera (1990) 11–13; Murnaghan (1999) 205; Derderian (2001) 31; Tsagalis (2004) 2–8.

Similarly, Pindar's *paianes* are complex pieces of poetry commissioned by entire *poleis*, but their existence does not prevent us from including simpler songs in the same category.

In the case of *thrēnos*, however, scholars have argued that in the archaic period there existed a real distinction in types of lament which reflected the different categories of mourners at a funeral. Thus the female relatives of the deceased performed *gooi*, which expressed personalized sentiments about the loss of the dead man and its effect on the bereaved; and these (it is argued) were distinct from the professionally performed *thrēnoi* both in content and in details of performance. In fact, however, the evidence for this sharp distinction is rather less clear-cut than is sometimes acknowledged. The supposed distinction is based on two main observations, concerning firstly the use of the word *thrēnos* in the Homeric poems, and secondly the surviving *thrēnoi* of Pindar and Simonides.

While the Homeric poems contain numerous words for grief and lamentation, the word *thrēnos* (or its verb *thrēnēō*) is rare, occurring only once in each poem.⁴ The funeral of Hector at the end of the *Iliad* begins with a *thrēnos* performed by the bards (παρὰ δ' εἶσαν ἀοιδούς / θρήνων ἐξάρχους, οἳ τε στονόεσαν ἀοιδὴν / οἳ μὲν ἄρ' ἐθρήνεον, 24.720–2), while the description of Achilles' funeral in the *Odyssey* includes the *thrēnos* sung in his honour by the Muses (Μοῦσαι δ' ἐννέα πᾶσαι ἀμειβόμεναι ὀπὶ καλῇ / θρήνεον, 24.60).⁵ In both these instances the performers of the *thrēnos* are not the only mourners and they form a chorus of professional singers, in contrast with the laments performed by the friends and relatives of the dead man. In the case of Hector, the bards' song is joined by the cries of the women (ἐπὶ δὲ στενάχοντο γυναῖκες, 722), and the main laments are those offered by Hector's female relatives, an act described as 'leading the *goos*' (ἡρχε γόοιο, 723, ἐξῆρχε γόοιο, 747, 761). In the case of Achilles, Thetis and the other sea-nymphs lament the dead man as they prepare his body for burial (οἴκτρ' ὀλοφυρόμεναι, 59). The word

⁴ Derderian (2001) 17–40 provides a detailed analysis of the different Homeric words for grief, though, as I argue below, this kind of terminological distinction needs to be regarded with caution.

⁵ This scene (and the use of a *thrēnos*) is echoed in Pind. *Isth.* 8.58, where the Muses sing a *thrēnon* πολύφαιμον for the dead Achilles.

thrēnos, then, is only used by Homer in contexts of formal funeral song; when people express their grief in a more personal or spontaneous manner, different vocabulary is appropriate.⁶ The surviving fragments of *thrēnoi* also seem to confirm its association with formal and professional song, as they avoid expressing personal emotion and instead focus on general or philosophical themes. The tone set is one of restraint rather than passionate grief, as would be appropriate for a professionally composed piece.

While I concur that the basic identification of *thrēnoi* with professionally performed song is correct, we should not overstate the case. The Homeric examples are not entirely clear-cut, for while *thrēnos* is used of a more organized form of lament than the much more general *goos*, limiting its remit to professional singers is problematic. The bards (*aoidoi*) are not described as the only singers of the *thrēnos* for Hector: rather they are its ‘leaders’ (*thrēνων ἐξάρχους*, 721). This mirrors the description of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen as ‘leaders’ of the *goos*, and in both cases the phrasing suggests that the lament is perceived as something in which the wider group also participate. Indeed, the fact that the *thrēnos* is joined by the lamentation of the women (*ἐπὶ δὲ στενάχοντο γυναῖκες*, 722) suggests that the distinction between the two forms of lament is not viewed as absolute. Similarly, *thrēnoi* composed by Pindar and Simonides are, by definition, formal poetic pieces, but it does not follow from this that being a professional piece was a necessary or defining feature of the genre. Another piece of evidence sometimes adduced is Plutarch’s statement that Solon’s funerary legislation included the banning of ‘set-piece *thrēnoi*’ (*τὸ θρηνεῖν πεποιημένα*, *Sol.* 21.6.1). However, there are two problems with taking this phrase as evidence that *thrēnos* itself means a professional lament. Firstly, while Solon’s legislation was indeed archaic, Plutarch was writing many centuries later, and we would need to be sure that Plutarch was quoting rather than

⁶ Of course the *goos* in Greek lament was not spontaneous or random but a carefully controlled performance governed by its own conventions (cf. Derderian (2001) 35–40). This is elided in literary texts, where characters frequently lament in what appears to be a spontaneous manner, yet do so in a way which evokes the ritual *goos* (e.g. Briseis’ lament at *Il.* 19.287–300).

simply paraphrasing Solon to read subtle overtones into the choice of verb.⁷ Secondly, the verb *θρηνεῖν* here needs to be qualified by *πεποιημένα*, suggesting that the verb itself can simply mean ‘to lament’ (or at least that its associations with professional song is not firm enough to stand alone). Indeed, we do have a surviving piece of archaic literature where *θρῆνος* is used in exactly this sense. In Sappho fr. 150 V, the singer warns her audience that ‘it is not right that there should be a *thrēnos* in a house that serves the Muses—it would not be fitting for us’ (οὐ γὰρ θέμις ἐν μοισσοπόλων ἱοῖκία / θρῆνον ἔμμεν· οὐ κ’ ἄμμι τάδε πρέποι). If the word *θρῆνος* can only mean a funeral song performed by a professional bard, Sappho’s choice of vocabulary would seem strange: presumably the thought behind the fragment is that lamentation *in general* is inauspicious in this context.⁸ Thus, while *thrēnos* does indicate a formal mourning song, rather than simply an outpouring of grief, we should be careful as to how rigidly we subdivide among types of funerary performance. Speakers of a language are inevitably less rigorous than scholars in how they use terminology, and we should not allow ourselves to form excessively specific definitions, especially for genres where we have little evidence (see pp. 18–22 above for a fuller discussion of this issue).

Whatever the use of the term *θρῆνος* in the archaic period, it is certainly the case that by the fifth century it was used to mean simply a lament.⁹ The use of *thrēnos* as a genre-term suggests that it may have retained an association with formal performance—there is certainly no other term which can be used to denote a formal dirge. In tragedy, however, we find *θρῆνος* used interchangeably with other words of lamentation, without any discernible subtleties in the way they are deployed. Thus, for example, in *Andromache*, the

⁷ Ruschenbusch (1966) 46 describes the text as providing ‘eine Reihe wörtlicher Anklänge an den Originaltext der Gesetze’ (‘a series of verbal reminiscences of the original text of the laws’). On this basis, it would be dangerous to read too much into Plutarch’s use of a particular term; even if he is reflecting original Solonian language, he might have understood its meaning differently to its original connotations, and so expressed it accordingly.

⁸ Hardie (2005) sees Sappho’s rejection of threnodic song as reflecting a new attitude to the role of poets in the afterlife.

⁹ Cf. Alexiou (1974) 102–8.

eponymous heroine announces that she will ‘fill the sky with her *thrēnoi*, *gooi*, and tears’ (θρήνοισι καὶ γόοισι καὶ δακρύμασιν, 92), a phrase which implies that all three words can be used synonymously to mean ‘lamentation’. In *Choephoroi*, Electra refers to the song sung by herself and Orestes as a *thrēnos* (335), using the term of a personal expression of grief rather than a restrained professional song. Sophocles uses the word in this manner in *Oedipus at Colonus*, where Theseus responds to Antigone and Ismene’s cries of grief by telling them to ‘cease your *thrēnos*’ (παύετε θρήνον, 1751), a phrase echoed by the Chorus a little later (1778). This flexibility suggests that the conflation of mourning terms cannot have been perceived as problematic by a fifth-century audience, and hence that the terminology did not reflect important subdivisions in a fifth-century understanding of funerary practice.¹⁰

In a study whose aim is to explore tragedy’s use of ritual song, the audience’s contemporary experience is of central importance. There must have been a range of conventions which could evoke ritual lamentation to a fifth-century Greek, and tragedy appears uninterested in distinguishing between them. Similarly, we saw in the previous chapter that tragedy conflates different aspects of marriage ritual in order to evoke hymenaeal song, and that attempts to subdivide are not productive. Hence in discussing the conventions of mourning song, I will not limit myself to the *thrēnoi* of Pindar and Simonides, but will look for continuities and distinctive features across the range of funerary poetry and song.

CONVENTIONS OF LAMENTATION

Female ritual lament

Literary and iconographic evidence allows us to come to some general conclusions as to the conventions of ritual lament and its various

¹⁰ For *thrēnos* used to mean any kind of lament cf. also Aesch. *Cho.* 926, *Seven* 863, 1064; Soph. *Aj.* 582, 632, 852, *El.* 88, 104, 232, 255, 530, 1469, *Phil.* 209; Eur. *Hec.* 212, 298, 434, 675, *Hel.* 166, 604, 1054, 1112, *IT* 144, 490, 1095, *Med.* 626, 1211, 1249, 1396, 1409, *Or.* 132, 985, *Phoen.* 1635, 1762, *Tro.* 111, 684; [Aesch.] *PV* 43, 388, 615.

forms. Vase-painting frequently depicts scenes of lamentation, particularly representations of the *prothesis*: the laying out of the corpse and the occasion for mourning.¹¹ Images of the *prothesis* frequently show female mourners standing around the body and engaged in ritual activities such as holding the dead man's head, beating their own breast and head, and tearing their hair: all gestures which are mentioned in literary sources.¹² Males are also depicted as present at the *prothesis*, but in contrast to the emotional displays of the women they are portrayed as forming an orderly procession and are located further from the body.¹³ From our earliest visual representations, then, mourning is depicted as an activity segregated along gender-lines, with different roles allotted for women and for men. Women were expected to behave in a distraught manner, in conformity with the stereotype that they were uncontrolled and emotional, while men were expected to demonstrate more self-restraint.¹⁴ The later restrictions on female mourning in Athens (discussed below) further suggest an association between women and passionate lamentation.¹⁵ Our earliest literary sources confirm this portrayal, for the images of mourning women on vases are evocative of the funeral of Hector and

¹¹ For the ritual of the Greek funeral and the role of the *prothesis* see Reiner (1938) 35–42; Alexiou (1974) 4–7; Garland (1985) 23–31.

¹² Metcalf and Huntington (1991) analyse patterns of funerary behaviour across a wide range of cultures and note (63–4) that rituals surrounding the mourners' hair are one of the few features which are virtually universal.

¹³ Cf. Alexiou (1974) 6; Stears (2008) 141. For a detailed discussion of gendered displays of mourning in archaic art see van Wees (1998) 22–41.

¹⁴ As Metcalf and Huntington (1991) 43–61 note, the emotions expressed in ritual displays of grief are determined by cultural factors as much as by personal feeling. We should therefore not be surprised that the normative mourning patterns in ancient Greece affirmed the dominant ideology of the differences between the genders.

¹⁵ The association between women and wild lament is made clear by Plutarch's statement that women who offended against funeral laws could be punished for 'unmanly and feminine mourning behaviour' (ὡς ἀνάνδρως καὶ γυναικῶδες τοῖς περὶ τὰ πένθη πάθει, *Sol.* 21.5). As Holst-Warhaft (1992) 99 notes, this is, on the face of it, an odd statement as it implies women were punished for failing to behave like men. The explanation is presumably that excessive lamentation was considered by definition feminine, but also considered inappropriate and therefore culpable, since after the ban it was forbidden even for women to behave in this way. Plutarch's statement thus conflates these two separate attitudes towards mourning in a way that appears superficially confused but in fact reveals a great deal about attitudes towards women and lamentation.

Homeric and tragic depictions of female lament often involve antiphony between mourners and a wider group. In Hector's case, the general cries of grief are interspersed with the individual laments of Hector's nearest kinswomen: his wife, mother, and sister-in-law (*Il.* 24.723–76). Even in less formal displays of grief we see a tendency towards antiphony: for example, Andromache sets the servants in her house to join her in mourning (*Il.* 6.498–9), while Thetis mourns Achilles' future death among the other Nereids (*Il.* 18.50–1). This, combined with the frequency of antiphonal lament in tragedy, has led scholars to posit that antiphonal singing was a particular feature of the ritual lament.¹⁷ Tragedy also falls into antiphonal song in order to lament: hence Aristotle's definition of the *kommos* as a *thrēnos* (*Poetics* 12.1452^b), and it is tempting to believe that this reflects ritual practice.¹⁸ Tragic set-piece laments frequently take the form of antiphonal song, which may be between an actor and the Chorus or between two characters or two choral groupings. Particularly striking is the end of *Seven Against Thebes* where Antigone and Ismene (or two semi-choruses) pass the lament between themselves, picking up and repeating each other's phrases (961–1004).¹⁹ The lines are short and simple, yet rely on heavy verbal echoing and wordplay:

Ἰσμ. μελεοπαθῆς (961-3)

¹⁹ For the similarities to ritual lament, and Aeschylus' manipulation of convention, see Hutchinson (1985) 178–81.

ANTIGONE. You were struck as you struck.

ISMENE.

You died as you killed.

A. You killed with the spear.

I.

You died by the spear.

A. Terrible toil.

I.

Terrible suffering.

Another example is the subsidiary chorus of Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, where the arrival of the bones of the Argives is greeted by an antiphonal song shared between the mothers and the children of the deceased (1123–64). Again we see ritualistic phraseology such as the anaphora which begins the first two pairs of response, the childrens' *φέρω φέρω* (1123) and *ἄπαις ἄπαις* (1131) echoed by the mothers' *ἰὼ ἰὼ* (1127=1133). We even find instances in tragedy where the antiphony of lament is self-consciously evoked as a convention: for example when Neoptolemus' death is reported in *Andromache*, Peleus and the Chorus sing an antiphonal lament, where the Chorus describe themselves as 'beginning the lament' (*ὀττοτοτοτοῖ, θανόντα δεσπόταν γόοις / νόμῳ τῶν νερτέρων κατάρξω*, 1197–9) and Peleus responds by saying he will 'take it up in succession' (*ὀττοτοτοτοῖ, διάδοχά <σοι> τάλας ἐγὼ / γέρων καὶ δυστυχῆς δακρύω*, 1200–1). Similarly, when Admetus asks the Chorus to sing a lament for Alcestis, the verb he uses is to 'sing in response' (*ἀντηχήσατε*, 423).

Homeric mourning may also give us insight into the content of women's lamentation, though again we need to tread with caution for the laments are designed to achieve a poetic purpose rather than to accurately reflect mourning custom. In Hector's case, while each woman expresses different concerns and ideas, there are overall similarities in the structure and themes of their laments.²⁰ Each lament begins by establishing the speaker's relationship to the dead man (*ἄνερ*, 725; *πάντων πολὺ φίλτατε παίδων*, 748; *δαέρων πολὺ φίλτατε πάντων*, 762), and goes on to explain what the death means to her and how it will affect her life.²¹ Thus Andromache

²⁰ See Tsagalis (2004) 27–32 for the typology of Homeric *goos*.

²¹ Because of the focus on the women's own suffering, some scholars have taken these laments as subversive of the poem's heroic values: cf. Holst-Warhaft (1992) 112–13; Derderian (2001) 10; Foley (2001) 19–56; Perkell (2008). Reading the

begins by explaining her status as a young widow whose husband has died an untimely death (*ἀνερ ἀπ' αἰῶνος νέος ὦλεο, καὶ δέ με χήρην / λείπεις ἐν μεγάροισι* (24.725–6), before going on to contemplate her position as a mother and the future fate of her child (726–38). Andromache also articulates the effect that Hector's death will have on the wider community, imagining her own enslavement and by implication that of the other Trojan women (732–4). Hecuba's speech is much shorter, but she compares Hector's fate to that of her other sons (751–6), thus establishing her position as a bereaved mother. Similarly, Helen's description of the protection that Hector offered her highlights her own position within the house, and anticipates the difficulties she will now face (767–72).²² Both Hecuba and Helen begin their speeches with declarations of affection for Hector which suggest their own feelings of loss (748, 762).²³

While the laments for Hector are the only ones in the poem couched as ritual laments rather than spontaneous expressions of grief, we see similar themes in other Iliadic laments and it seems likely that the poet is drawing on motifs from ritual lament in order to give these speeches power.²⁴ Thus, when Briseis mourns Patroclus' death she recalls her relationship with him and mourns his loss as a guardian who had promised to protect her status within Achilles'

speeches in this light, however, overlooks that this focus on suffering may be a conventional feature of lament. Moreover, it does not follow that focusing on the negative consequences of the hero's death is a way of challenging heroic values; it is equally possible to argue that the women's pain and suffering is a way of expressing how important the hero was in life, and hence a mechanism for elevating him: see Murnaghan (1999); Sultan (1999) 80–1; Dué (2006) 40–3.

²² Helen's statement of her own future suffering is striking in that it reflects that of Andromache yet obviously pales beside it, and scholars have differed on how to interpret this. Thus Perkell (2008) sees it as a sign of Helen's self-absorption, while Roisman (2006) (in my view rightly) sees it as a device for highlighting Hector's familial side and his kindness.

²³ Perkell (2008) 96–101 suggests that the absence of a term of endearment from the opening of Andromache's speech highlights her criticism of Hector's value-system. Again, this seems to me to be tendentious: Andromache makes explicit her love for Hector (742–5), and the simple *ἀνερ* with which she begins her lament (725) could be interpreted as more powerful in its simplicity than any formulaic expression of affection: cf. Tatum (2003) 4.

²⁴ See Martin (2008) 122, who argues that Helen's language throughout the poem is designed to evoke ritual lament.

household (*Il.* 19.295–300). Indeed, Briseis uses the loss of Patroclus' kindness in order to justify her desire to lament him (*τῷ σ' ἄμοτον κλαίω τεθνηότα* ('therefore I weep for your death without ceasing', 300). Similarly when Thetis mourns Achilles in front of the Nereids, she laments her own pain in anticipating his future death and her position as a mother (*ὦ μοι ἐγὼ δειλή, ὦ μοι δυσαριστοτόκεια*, 'alas, wretched me, alas for the pain in giving birth to the best of men', 18.54). It seems conventional, then, that the dead man is mourned for his loss as a social figure, and for the role he played in the lives of his female relatives. In order to express the importance of the loss, the women focus on the consequences of the death, and the suffering they experience as a result. Whether or not it is safe to assume that this reflects real-life practice, it does seem to be established as a literary convention of mourning, and thus something a fifth-century audience would recognize. It is certainly a common feature of tragic lament: for example, as Medea contemplates her children's death, she grieves for the loss of her normal expectations as a mother (*Med.* 1023–39); similarly, when Hecuba mourns Astyanax, she recalls the promises the boy made to her as his grandmother, and laments her status as an old woman without family (*Tro.* 1180–8). The idea that lamenting one's own situation was integral to ritual mourning is embedded in the women's lament over Patroclus in the *Iliad*, where we are told that each woman uses her wailing for Patroclus as a pretext for mourning her own sorrows (*ἐπὶ δὲ στενάχοντο γυναῖκες / Πάτροκλον πρόφασιν, σφῶν δ' αὐτῶν κήδε' ἐκάστη*, 19.301–2).

Literary and artistic depictions of female lament have tantalized scholars by raising the prospect of an authentic female voice. Nevertheless, our accounts of women's lament are in fact drawn from male sources, whether in literature or in art. As such these representations have their own artistic agenda, and while they may draw on real-life ritual practice, they are not intended to be straightforward replicas of historical laments. Despite the frequency of lament in poetry, it is therefore difficult to judge how close a relationship it bears to the real laments of Greek women. We must, then, be cautious when we use these as sources, for repeated *topoi* could be attributed to poetic or artistic convention, rather than to ritual detail. In contrast, while we

have few poetic descriptions of public (and male) forms of lamentation, we do have surviving examples, both in *thrēnoi* and in funerary epigrams, which (as we shall see) present a different facet of Greek mourning.

Thrēnoi

We know of only two poets who composed *thrēnoi* (Pindar and Simonides) and a small number of fragments survive from each. Moreover, the fragments that survive are not a random selection, but are often quoted by authors interested in philosophical poetry. We should therefore be cautious about assuming that the extant fragments are representative of the genre as a whole.²⁵ These caveats aside, however, when we examine the surviving *thrēnoi* it is possible to draw certain conclusions about the genre's style and preoccupations. First, as we have already seen, the *thrēnos*, as a public and poetic genre, avoids expressions of personal grief and sets a restrained and philosophical tone. Simonides' surviving *thrēnoi* stress the inevitability of death and suffering in human life. Thus, fr. 520, 523, and 524 *PMG* stress that death comes to all men, while 520 and 523 also describe the danger and toil inherent to the human condition. Similarly, several fragments emphasize the instability of human life: fr. 521 compares the changes in human fortune with the quick movements of a fly (ὥκεια γὰρ οὐδὲ τανυπτερύγου μύϊας / οὕτως ἀμετάστασις, 3–4) while fr. 527 describes the gods' role in altering human fate. Thus the bereaved are comforted by reflecting on the universal nature of mortality and suffering: a common theme in Greek consolation, and one which we can trace back to Achilles' speech to Priam at the end of the *Iliad* (24.601–20).²⁶ We find similar themes and motifs in Pindaric *thrēnoi*. Like other forms of poetry, the surviving fragments of *thrēnoi* use myth as a foil for the situation at hand, and to extract broader truths and morals. So, for example, the inevitability of death is demonstrated by telling the stories of the deaths of heroes such as the sons of Calliope (fr. 128c S–M), or

²⁵ Cf. Derderian (2001) 117.

²⁶ For the literary sources for ancient consolation, see Kassel (1958).

Caeneus, traditionally known to be invulnerable (fr. 128f).²⁷ More explicit moralizing may be indicated by the phrase ἄλλο[τε δ' ἄλλ]οῖαι²⁸ which follows the myth of Ino in fr. 128d.8 S–M, an expression which, as Cannatà Fera notes, is typically used by Pindar to express the changeability of human fortune.

Despite its restrained and moralizing tone, the *thrēnos* was still a response to death, and it is unsurprising that we are told that lament was a characteristic part of Pindaric *thrēnoi* (Horace, *Odes* 4.2.21–4). As well as words and themes connected with death and mourning, the *thrēnos* involved a ritual refrain like *paian* or *hymenaios*: we find traces of this refrain in the repeated phrase ὄ[ρθιο]ν ἰά[λεμ]ον / κελα]δῆσα[τε] which acts as an invitation to the wider audience to participate in the lament (fr. 128ea.2–3, 128eb.6–7 S–M).²⁹

Nevertheless, we also find a more optimistic note in Pindaric *thrēnoi*, as the poet presents the prospect that the dead man has gone on to a better existence. In the *thrēnoi*, Pindar deviates from the Homeric portrayal of the underworld and instead presents the idea that existence after death can be a joyful one, and that good behaviour in this life can lead to rewards.³⁰ For example, fr. 129 S–M, quoted by Plutarch (*Consol. ad Apoll.* 35 120c), describes the idyllic existence which the souls of pious men enjoy in Hades. The dead are imagined as living in an idealized *locus amoenus*, complete with roses, shady incense trees, incense, and fruit (3–5). The land is infused with a ‘lovely smell’ (ὀδμὰ δ' ἐρατόν, 8): while the scent is a natural

²⁷ See Cannatà Fera (1990) 143 on the consolatory function of the myth in fr. 56; 157–9 on the Caeneus myth.

²⁸ The phrase (literally ‘different ones at different times’) is used elsewhere by Pindar to indicate the shifting of mortal fortune: cf. *Ol.* 7.95 (ἐν δὲ μὲν μοῖρα χρόνον / ἄλλοτ' ἄλλοιαι διαθύσσοισιν αἶραι, ‘in a single portion of time the winds shift now one way, now another’); *Pyth.* 3.104 (ἄλλοτε δ' ἄλλοιαι πνοαί / ὑμπετεῖν ἀνέμων, ‘the blasts of the high-flying winds blow in different ways at different times’).

²⁹ Cannatà Fera (1990) 124.

³⁰ Cannatà Fera (1990) 31 stresses the contrast between Pindar’s threnodic and his epinician outlook, and argues that the *epinikia* (other than *Ol.* 2) followed Homer in presenting the contrast between life and death as a bleak one. As Currie (2005) 34–5 points out, however, this reasoning is in danger of circularity, as scholars tend to attribute fragments according to their expectations, and attempt to explain away inconsistencies (cf. Impellizzeri (1939) on *Ol.* 2). Nevertheless, the focus on the afterlife in the *thrēnoi* does seem to be a characteristic feature of that genre, even if optimistic elements may also be found in *epinikia*.

corollary of the roses and incense, sweet smells are also associated with divinity, and so the description characterizes the place as a holy one.³¹ The souls themselves are envisaged as anthropomorphized, enjoying the same activities that formed the leisure pursuits of the aristocratic male in life: athletics, board-games, and music (6–7), while their continual sacrificing (9–10) indicates not only piety but also perpetual feasting. Thus, Pindar is able to console his listeners by portraying the happiness that the dead man now enjoys, while also reminding them of their own mortality and the future that awaits them. Conversely, fr. 130 S–M warns of the dangers of bad behaviour by describing the wretched existence of the souls of the wicked (Plut. *de Lat. Vid.* 7.1130c). A similar theme of judgement is found in fr. 131b S–M, where Pindar describes dreams as the soul's attempt to reveal the future judgement it will undergo.³² The poet achieves a still more optimistic tone in fr. 133 S–M, quoted by Plato to support his doctrine of *anamnesis* and the immortality of the soul (*Men.* 81b).³³ This poem describes the return of souls to earth after nine years in the underworld, and anticipates the heroization of those who are exceptional: kings, athletes, and wise men. Similarly, the myth of Ino in fr. 128d S–M acts as a paradigm for this moral system, reminding the audience that great suffering can lead to eventual happiness.³⁴

We thus see underlying continuities across the surviving threnodic fragments. As we might expect from a genre of formal lamentation rather than private grief, *thrēnos* does not express personal emotion, but seeks to draw general morals from the situation at hand. The subject matter is used to establish a philosophical stance, whether the importance of accepting death or the abiding importance of good moral character. The poems are directed from an outside group to the mourners, who are the target of the advice. This should not be surprising: in *hymenaios* and *epinikion*, after all, the poetry is

³¹ Cf. *Lfgre* s.v. ἀμβρόσιος II.2, and see also Janko (1992) on Hom. *Il.* 14.170–1; West (1988) on Hom. *Od.* 4.445; Richardson (1974) 252; Barrett (1964) on Eur. *Hipp.* 1391–3, where Hippolytus recognizes Artemis by her fragrance.

³² See Brillante (1987).

³³ For a discussion of Pindar's philosophy, see McGibbon (1964); Lloyd-Jones (1984).

³⁴ Cf. Cannatà Fera (1990) 118.

focalized from the point of view of the wider community, not the individuals who lie at the centre of its function.

Pindar's emphasis on the virtue of the dead evokes another element of *thrēnoi* attested by later writers: the expectation that they should contain a eulogy of the deceased.³⁵ In Pindar's *Isthmian* 8.56a–60, the poet describes the *thrēnos* sung by the Muses at Achilles' funeral, and gives it the epithet *πολύφαμος* (58), suggesting the role of funerary poetry in confirming the reputation of the deceased. The theme of praising the virtuous dead is also picked up by Simonides in a fragment of disputed genre (fr. 531 *PMG*), which praises those who died at Thermopylae. Like Pindar fr. 133 S–M, the poem explicitly looks forward to the immortalizing power of hero cult. It goes as far as to suggest that power of memory can blur the boundary between mortals and gods, describing the dead men's tomb as an altar (*βωμὸς δ' ὁ τάφος*, 3). While this poem may not be a *thrēnos* (as it might have been composed for performance at a cult setting rather than to honour a dead human), the tradition of encomiastic *thrēnoi* makes the boundary between *thrēnoi* and praise of heroes a blurred one.³⁶ The encomiastic elements in funeral ritual lie behind the development of the *epitaphios logos*, with its generalized praise of the war dead.³⁷ We see similar themes in other aspects of the female ritual lament, for while praise and grief appear to be opposed, praising the deceased is also integrally connected with lamenting his loss.³⁸ By expressing the impact of the death, the mourner confirms the dead man's importance and notes particular admirable qualities now lost to them. Thus, Andromache recalls Hector's role as bastion of Troy in order to anticipate the city's fall (Hom. *Il.* 24.728–30); Hecuba notes the gods' special care for

³⁵ Cf. Hor. *Odes* 4.2.21–4; Aristocles *ap.* Ammon. *περὶ διαφόρ.* λέξ. 178.4 Nickau; Didymus *ap.* Orion ε 58.7: see Harvey (1955) 170.

³⁶ For a discussion of the genre of this poem, see Cannatà Fera (1990) 24–5; Steiner (1999). See also Seaford (1994) 139–43 for a discussion of how hero cult could fulfil some of the needs of the ritual lament, and Currie (2005) 47–59 for a discussion of how hero cult can permeate poetry whose primary function is not cultic.

³⁷ See Loraux (1986) 44; Herrman (2003) 4.

³⁸ Cf. Murnaghan (1999) 204: 'lamentation is an urgent expression of that person's value, and so is a form of praise'. For the connection between *kleos* and *penthos* see Nagy (1979) 94–117; Dué (2006) 40. Tsagalis (2004) 32–6 identifies praise as a structural element of the Homeric lament.

Hector's corpse because of his piety (24.749–50); Helen praises Hector's gentle character before describing how the loss of such gentleness will affect her own life (24.767–72).³⁹ While all these ideas are expressed in a context of sorrow, they nevertheless commemorate positive qualities and establish them as a fact to be remembered about the dead man.⁴⁰ Thus, while the ritual lament is in a sense antithetical to praise, these sentiments of grief also play an important role in commemorating and praising the dead.⁴¹

Epigrams

When we turn to funerary epigrams we again see continuities in the conventions and techniques of lament. Unlike *thrēnoi*, we have substantial numbers of surviving epigrams, mostly found in Attica and usually in elegiac metre. In one sense, epigrams lie at the opposite end of the scale to *thrēnoi*: rather than being elite, poetically crafted songs, they are brief inscriptions, which are formulaic in nature and offer little opportunity to demonstrate literary flair. Nevertheless, the epigram, like the *thrēnos*, is a public and commemorative element of mourning ritual rather than a personal expression of grief. The public nature and longevity of the epigram must have made it influential in determining general attitudes towards mourning, for whether or not a fifth-century Athenian was familiar with formal *thrēnoi* or women's lamentation, he must have regularly seen grave *stelai* from an earlier period encouraging the passer-by to notice and lament the dead.⁴²

Like the *thrēnos*, the epigram sets a tone of restraint, yet this is used to create a sense of pathos. Thus, the famous Phrasicleia inscription (CEG 24) does not use emotional language, yet encourages us to see

³⁹ Pantelia (2002) also suggests that Helen alone of the women understands the importance of *kleos* and commemoration through poetry, and as such is an appropriate character to conclude the laments.

⁴⁰ Cf. Reiner (1938) 62–7, 116–20; Richardson (1985) 350; Dué (2006) 43.

⁴¹ For the connection between lament and commemoration cf. also Martin (1989) 86–8; Easterling (1991). Sultan (1991) traces the role of female lament in guaranteeing male *kleos* from the *Odyssey* to modern Greek lament.

⁴² See Derderian (2001) 76 on the epigram's role in communicating with a wider spectrum of participants.

the poignancy of Phrasicleia's fate by its simple description of her premature death (κόρε κεκλέσσομαι αἰεὶ | ἀντὶ γάμο παρὰ θεὸν τοῦτο λαχὸς ὄνομα, 'I shall always be called a maiden, having received this name from the gods in place of a marriage'). Similarly, CEG 13, an epigram for a young man called Tetichos, evokes the sadness of a young warrior's death by reminding us that he 'lost his fresh youth' (νεαρὰν ἤβην ὀλέσαντα, 3), a phraseology which recalls the pathos of Homeric battle descriptions.⁴³ Indeed, the epigrams frequently make explicit the emotional response required from the reader, with their exhortation that the passer-by should pity or lament the deceased.⁴⁴ The reader is sometimes described as passing by or stopping to read the monument, implicitly creating a poignant contrast between his everyday activities and the dead man, frozen at a particular point in time.⁴⁵ In the Tetichos inscription, for example, the passer-by is asked to continue his journey only after taking time to pity the dead youth (Τέτιχον οἰκτίρας ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν παρίτο, 2). The passer-by is advised to 'go on to a good deed' after mourning Tetichos' fate (ταῦτ' ἀποδύραμενοι νέεσθε ἐπὶ πρᾶγμ' ἀγαθόν, 4), suggesting Tetichos' heroic death in battle, but also reminding the reader of his own vitality.⁴⁶ The contrast between the passer-by and the dead man whose memorial he is reading is related to the motif of the fragility of human life. The reader is implicitly reminded that even those who deserve praise for their great deeds must die, and in pitying the dead he also anticipates his own eventual fate. Indeed this motif is made explicit in CEG 34, where the reader is asked to pour out tears 'since death awaits you too' (ἐπεὶ καὶ | σὲ μένει θάνατος). So although the composer of the epigram does not have the scope to indulge in extensive philosophy, we see traces of the traditional consolations which the threnodic poets were able to expand upon at greater length.

⁴³ Cf. Stecher (1981) 28; Day (1989) 17–18.

⁴⁴ The verb οἰκτίρω is prominent (e.g. CEG 13, 27, 28, 51, 68) but other words or phrases indicating pity are also used.

⁴⁵ The command στήθι is used in CEG 27 and 28. In 13 the command to stop is left implicit, but the inscription nevertheless uses an imperative (νέεσθε) and requires the passer-by to read and mourn before continuing his journey.

⁴⁶ Cf. Friedländer and Hoffleit (1948) no. 135; Day (1989) 19.

As well as the sorrow associated with the ritual lament, epigrams also incorporate ideas of praise and commemoration. The inscription is part of a monument designed to preserve the memory of the deceased: effectively a physical instantiation of their reputation.⁴⁷ The purpose of erecting a funerary monument is to create a permanent reminder of the dead man and of the deeds which deserve to be commemorated. While funeral inscriptions and engraved *stelai* mostly date from the sixth century, we find the idea that *kleos* can be physically captured anticipated in the *Iliad*, as Hector imagines the monument of the adversary he kills as a way of reminding future generations of his greatness (7.85–91). The content of the description may involve explicit praise. For example, the epigram may allude to the great deeds of its *laudandus*, such as a glorious death in war (CEG 13, 27). Alternatively, the dead man is frequently praised for his virtues: in particular *aretē* and *sōphrosynē*, which are frequently juxtaposed.⁴⁸ The monument itself is sometimes introduced as the tomb of a good and self-restrained man (σῆμ' ἀγαθὸ | καὶ σόφρονος ἀνδρὸς, CEG 34, 36), suggesting a link between virtue and memorialization. While most inscriptions are relatively discreet with their praise, some can be much more effusive: for example CEG 69 consists of a list of positive qualities (εὐδοχσον | σόφρ[ονα κ] | αὐτὸς πινοτόν πᾶσαν ἡέχον | τ' ἀρετέν).

Lamenting and remembering the dead thus took various forms in the Greek world, ranging from the ritualized emotion of the female lament to the restrained public statement made by the funerary epigram. We see a distinction between private and public lamentation: the former provides a vehicle for the expression of strong emotion while the latter is used to commemorate and praise the dead man, or as a starting point for exploring general philosophical themes. This distinction also suggests gender boundaries, whereby the personal lamentation of women is constructed as separate from

⁴⁷ Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) 147–51 argues that referring to the monument or burial is an indispensable feature of the funerary epigram, linked to its function to commemorate.

⁴⁸ North (1966) 13 sees this phrase as evidence of a new type of *aretē* to replace heroic values. Whether or not one is inclined to accept this developmental model, it is certainly true that *aretē* and *sōphrosynē* are core civic values and constitute high praise for the citizen of a *polis*.

the restrained and philosophical lamentation of men. Despite the diversity of these types of lament, however, we see common themes emerging. Lamentation is frequently designed to articulate the dead man's social position, whether through personal expressions of bereavement or through formal praise of his fine qualities or deeds.

FUNERAL LEGISLATION

These continuities nonetheless fail to take account of one of the most problematic issues in ascertaining tragedy's relationship to ritual lament: namely, the changes which affected the Greek funeral in the pre-classical period. For other forms of ritual song, we have little firm evidence as to whether they changed substantially during the archaic and classical period. On the whole, ritual purports to be conservative and so it seems safe to speculate that ritual allusions evoke not only the poetic past but also contemporary practice. In the case of funerary song, however, the situation is very different, for we know that the state explicitly outlawed many of the funerary practices which had previously been traditional. Thus, when tragedy alludes to these ritual practices, it is not simply evoking a tradition, but recreating activities which would be illegal if performed in real life.⁴⁹ In order to understand what the tragedians are doing in their portrayal of heroic grief, it is necessary to examine the funeral legislation and its effects on Athenian mourning.

During the archaic period, various *poleis* across Greece introduced legislation aimed at changing and controlling the funeral.⁵⁰ In Athens, Solon's laws included detailed regulations on funerary practice described by Plutarch and Demosthenes (Plut. *Sol.* 21, Dem. 43.62); Cicero also attests a set of post-Solonian laws dealing with the same topic (*de Leg.* 2.59–66).⁵¹ Part of the legislation's aim appears to

⁴⁹ Cf. Foley (2001) 26–7.

⁵⁰ For similar legislation in other cities see Plut. *Lyc.* 27 (Sparta); Stob. *Flor.* 44.40 (Catana); Cic. *de Leg.* 2.66 (Mytilene). Garland (1989) and Seaford (1994) 76–8 give a useful overview.

⁵¹ Cicero simply describes the laws as 'some time later' (*post aliquanto*), and scholars have debated whether they belonged to the Peisistratid period or to

have been to restrict the scale and expense of funeral ritual: for example, Plutarch tells us that Solon's laws forbade sacrificing a bull or burying the dead man with more than three garments. Similarly, the legislation attested by Cicero limited the size and decoration of tomb monuments to what ten men could construct within three days, preventing aristocrats from constructing very large or ornate tombs. As well as financial restrictions, the legislation attempted to reduce the public impact and emotional intensity of funerals. Whereas in the *Iliad* Hector's *prothesis* lasts for nine days, the Solonian *prothesis* was limited to a single day, preventing prolonged lamentation. The funeral procession itself had to take place before sunrise, again limiting the public impact it could create. Displays of grief were strictly regulated: the practice of self-laceration was banned, as were set-piece lamentations (presumably performed by professional poets), while Cicero also tells us that the post-Solonian restrictions forbade praise of the dead except at public funerals. The mourning practices of women in particular were controlled: women were required to walk behind men in the procession, and only close relatives or women over 60 were allowed to follow the procession or enter the tomb.

The rationale behind the legislation is debated, but it seems likely that its purpose goes beyond the purely economic, and rather acts as an ideologically driven mechanism.⁵² Avoiding ostentatious behaviour is a typical feature of Greek morality, often emphasized through *gnōmai* about the dangers of excess and the importance of remaining *metrios*. As we saw in our discussion of *epinikion*, excessive behaviour by individuals was felt to pose dangers to the community as a whole. Moreover, funerals provided a natural forum for aristocratic families to flaunt their wealth, and to play out rivalries with other clans: further conditions which led to social instability and had

Cleisthenes: for the former position see Richter (1945); (1961) 38–9; Boardman (1955) 53; for the latter see Clairmont (1983) 75. Garland (1989) 5–6 gives a summary of the issues involved.

⁵² Seaford (1994) 79–81. Sourvinou-Inwood (1983) sees the legislation as representing a shift in cultural attitudes towards death, but I see Seaford's political explanation as more convincing given the changes in government and social structure which were occurring throughout Greece during this period. See also Garland (1989).

been influential in the rise of tyrants.⁵³ As well as lavish funerals, aristocratic clans also organized cult rituals in honour of their ancestors, including the performance of *thrēnoi* commemorating the dead. Participation in this kind of family cult could be seen as encouraging loyalty to the clan above the wider community of the *polis*. It is therefore unsurprising that the restrictions on private lamentation coincided with a rise in public funerals, and a revival of hero cult, thus providing new and more corporate focuses of loyalty.⁵⁴

Whatever its rationale, the legislation had a large impact on the nature of Athenian funerals, and hence on the way ritual lamentation was perceived.⁵⁵ The banning of 'set-piece laments' (τὸ θρηνεῖν πεποιημένα, Plut. *Sol.* 21.6.1) would have made commissioning a *thrēnos* problematic: indeed Nilsson suggests that the legislation explains why so few *thrēnoi* survive.⁵⁶ Similarly, the limitations placed on female mourning must have changed the nature of the *goos*, as well as restricting public female involvement in mourning.⁵⁷ Alongside the restrictions on personal funerals we also find the development of new forms of public lamentation, in particular the

⁵³ See Snodgrass (1980) 94–5 on how Solonian measures responded to social disruption caused by aristocratic behaviour.

⁵⁴ See Alexiou (1974) 18–19; Holst-Warhaft (1992) 116; Seaford (1994) 106–14. For the relationship between private and state burial, see Stupperich (1977) 56–7, 71–137.

⁵⁵ The funeral legislation may not have been entirely successful—certainly the introduction of the second set of legislation described by Cicero (*de Leg.* 2.65) might suggest that the Solonian legislation needed further refining or was not being adequately observed. Nevertheless, even if the legislation was not always enforced, it still had important ramifications for the Athenian funeral, as attested by the changes in grave reliefs. For a discussion of the issue see Ruschenbusch (1966) 36–7; Shapiro (1991) esp. 631, 646–7; Thomas (2005) 41; Stears (2008) 142–3.

⁵⁶ Nilsson (1911) 81, cf. also Alexiou (1974) 18.

⁵⁷ We should be careful not to go too far here, though, for despite the restrictions women continued to lament their dead, walk in the funeral procession, and visit the graves of their relatives, as depicted on *lekythoi*: cf. Gould (1980) 50; Shapiro (1991) 649–55; Stears (2008) 143–50. While some scholars regard the funerary legislation as targeting women, it is more likely that the real target was loud and disruptive funerals, and that women were regulated simply because of the extrovert nature of mourning expected of them: cf. Stears (2008) 143.

public funeral oration in honour of the war dead, which incorporated praise of the dead into a more civic and less socially divisive form.⁵⁸

In tragedy, however, the real-life restrictions are rarely observed, or even alluded to. Tragic characters (including women) mourn their dead in a public setting, and at great length. Whereas the legislation insists the *prothesis* and mourning take place within the bounds of the house, in tragedy the dead are frequently brought out on-stage, so that the bodies can be handled and lamented in full view of the audience. Tragic lament rarely sets a tone of restraint and moderation, but rather of intense and passionate grief. Plato confirms that the differences between tragic and real-life lamentation were obvious in ancient times, as he uses it as part of his justification for disliking tragedy.⁵⁹

In the *Republic*, Plato deals with this topic twice, approaching it from different philosophical perspectives. Socrates first advocates banning poetry which depicts lamentation by male heroes on the grounds that it encourages an unsuitable attitude towards misfortune: good men should be equipped to bear catastrophe calmly and without emotion (3.387d–388e). The attitude which Socrates encourages is one borne out by surviving forms of public lament—*thrēnos* and funerary epigrams—and this suggests that Socrates' attitude is rooted in accepted morality. Socrates interestingly does not suggest that only female characters should be allowed to indulge in passionate lamentation, but rather limits it still further to the 'less respectable women and bad men' (γυναιξὶ δὲ ἀποδιδοίμεν, καὶ οὐδὲ ταύταις σπουδαίαις, καὶ ὅσοι κακοὶ τῶν ἀνδρῶν, 3.387e10–388a1). This reflects the restrictions on female mourning, implying that virtuous women would have been expected to grieve in a more

⁵⁸ Seaford (1994) 141 sees Solon's legislation as transforming poetic lament into separate genres, and in particular as lying behind the eulogistic and restrained tone of the public funeral oration. For the connection between ritual lament and funeral speech, see also Alexiou (1974) 150–4; Loraux (1986) 44–50. Loraux, however, sees a conflict between *thrēnos* and *encomium* whereas, as I argue here, both are inherent to all forms of ritual mourning.

⁵⁹ van Wees (1998) 16–17 suggests that Plato is more fervent about the importance of self-control than other classical sources, but nevertheless it is clear that an ideal of restraint exists (cf. e.g. Thgn. 355–9, 441–2; Eur. *Hel.* 947–53, *IA* 446–50; Dem. 18.97, 60.35), and instances where people fail to exhibit self-control play against this. See also Dover (1974) 167–8.

orderly manner: by Plato's time any public form of grief appears to have been regarded as distasteful. Socrates returns to this topic at the end of the dialogue, and gives a further justification for his views on art based on the philosophical division of soul and of city. In this section he explains that poetic lamentation is designed to indulge and strengthen the lowest and most bestial part of the soul, and hence is liable to have a morally corrosive effect on its audience (10.605c–606e). Underlying Plato's philosophical argumentation is the premiss that tragic lamentation is fundamentally different from approved real-life behaviour: indeed, this is made explicit when Socrates contrasts the pleasure Athenians take in watching poetic displays of grief with their restrained attitude towards their own misfortunes (605d10–e2). While Plato is not always a good source for the attitudes of ordinary Athenians, it would be difficult for him to make this argument if it were not in fact true that poetry was not subject to real-life conventions (both about lament and about other issues Plato takes issue with such as religion). Plato's belief about how tragic lamentation affected the soul may have been contentious, but his observation that different standards applied for poetic characters and for real mortals is hardly a surprising one.

Plato makes it clear that, in classical Athens, separate conventions applied to poetic depictions of lamentation and real-life expectations governing lament. This distinction is reminiscent of Plato's complaints about poetry's portrayal of the divine, where he also emphasizes the difference between literary portrayals of the gods and how they are regarded in cultic contexts. As modern scholars have established, Plato's complaints about religion echo a real-life distinction between poetic and cultic attitudes towards the gods, but it seems likely that such logical discrepancies were more worrying to intellectuals and philosophers than to the general public.⁶⁰ It might be tempting, then, to take a similar line with regard to lamentation: indeed the *Republic* passage makes clear that Athenians openly apply double standards when they watch mourning displays on-stage. However, the fact that tragic-style lamentation had been banned in Athenian society for more than a hundred years makes it harder

⁶⁰ See Mikalson (1991); Parker (1997): see Ch. 3 for further discussion of this theme.

simply to attribute the passionate laments of tragedy to convention. The funerary legislation makes it clear that wild lamentation had in fact been regarded as socially destabilizing in the past, and, assuming that the rules were still obeyed, that Athenians still viewed excessive mourning practices with suspicion.

LAMENT IN TRAGEDY

Given the subject-matter of tragedy, it is not surprising that its characters frequently need to lament. As Sheila Murnaghan points out, tragedy focuses as much on the experience of living on after catastrophe as on death itself, and we are encouraged to watch and learn from the responses of the bereaved as well as the deaths of the major characters.⁶¹ Tragic lamentation has been the subject of a great many studies, and could easily fill a monograph in its own right. Rather than reduplicating the work of other scholars here, I will instead focus on the aspect of tragic lamentation most pertinent to this book: how the tragedians evoke and deploy motifs which evoke traditional or ritual lament. For the reasons explored above, I will not look solely for allusions to the lyric *thrēnos*, but will examine tragedy's attitude to ritual mourning-song more generally. Because of the political nature of funeral lament, I will look in particular at plays which explore the meaning of different types of mourning, and which draw the audience's attention to the gap between the tragic world and their real-life experience of funerary practice.

Despite the prevalence of lament in tragedy, we rarely find lamentation of a form which directly represents the ritual lamentation of the Greek funeral.⁶² Rather, the lament is usually twisted in some way: for example, the mourner may be lamenting in isolation rather than as part of a group; the lament may be sung by the actual person who is about to die, or the body itself may be absent, isolating the lament from the funeral ritual with which it is normally associated. Tragedy's perversion of ritual normality is hardly unique to

⁶¹ Murnaghan (1999–2000) 109.

⁶² For a list and discussion of all tragic lament see Broadhead (1960) 310–17.

lamentation. Rather, just as tragedy most frequently uses *hymenaios* or *paian* in an ironic contrast, thus undermining the genres' usual associations and conventions, so too we also see funerary ritual subverted in order to create an unsettling effect. But whereas the subversion of *paian* or *hymenaios* comes about by ironically juxtaposing the songs' joyous associations with the disastrous world of tragedy, in the case of lament the song is already a response to a distressing event. However, by deliberately disobeying the conventions of real-life lament, tragedy undermines the comforting purpose which lament can fulfil.

Most studies of tragic lament have focused on female lament, or assumed that lamentation is a particularly female activity. Yet as a recent article by Ann Suter points out, tragedy is filled with men as well as women who lament, and as Suter notes, the evidence from tragedy alone would not lead us to regard mourning as a particularly gendered activity.⁶³ As we have seen, tragic lamentation bears little resemblance to post-Solonian Athenian practice. For the most part, the tragedians appear to be drawing on a literary tradition dating back to Homer which allows the expression of passionate grief. It is often believed that the freedom to weep and lament enjoyed by Homeric heroes reflects a different attitude to male mourning in the period when Homer was composing.⁶⁴ It seems more likely, however, that Homeric heroes were imagined to be as excessive in their grief as they were in their other emotions, and that they were not perceived as setting an example for a contemporary man to follow. After all, Homeric heroes are also prone to indulge in extreme displays of anger, but we do not take the touchiness of Achilles or his fellow warriors as expressing a normative mode of behaviour for ordinary people.⁶⁵ Rather, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* emphasize the

⁶³ Suter (2008) 156–80.

⁶⁴ Cf. Waern (1985); Monsacré (1984) 137–42; Holst-Warhaft (1992) 105; van Wees (1998) 12.

⁶⁵ van Wees (1998) 12 disputes such an interpretation on the grounds that 'it is highly unlikely that Homer and his audiences could have imagined heroes whose emotional behaviour was fundamentally unlike their own', but the heroes' emotional exceptionalism is a way of expressing their differences from the contemporary audience. While he does allow that intensifying emotions might add literary effect, it does not follow that this confirms that '[Homer's] original audiences... found

extremity and excess of the heroes, one aspect of which is their ability to feel and express emotions on a scale which would be impossible (and inappropriate) for contemporary mortals. When Achilles criticizes Patroclus for crying like a little girl (ἡὔτε κούρη / νηπίη, *Il.* 16.7–8), we are given an indication that tears could be regarded as a feminine characteristic as well as a childish one, and the fact that the criticism is couched within a simile (hence drawing on the audience's experience rather than the heroic world of the poem) suggests a gulf between contemporary values and the expected portrayal of heroes. The fact that male lamentation was considered problematic long before the classical period is further attested by Archilochus' injunction to 'push aside womanish lament' (γυναικεῖον πένθος ἀπωσάμενοι, fr. 13.10 W) in a poem mourning the death of fellow citizens. Hence, when tragic characters indulge in wild displays of grief, we should understand their displays as part of a wider poetic tradition, which reflects the extremity of every aspect of the heroic world.

Nevertheless, tragedy regularly plays upon the difference between the heroic past and contemporary reality.⁶⁶ It is therefore unsurprising that tragic characters sometimes comment on and criticize their own tendency to emotional lament, just as we also find them alluding to contemporary philosophical or political ideas within a heroic setting. For example Tecmessa expresses surprise at Ajax's weeping, recalling that 'he always used to consider such lamentations the sign of a cowardly and dejected man' (πρὸς γὰρ κακοῦ τε καὶ βαρυσύχου γόους / τοιούσδ' αἰεί ποτ' ἀνδρὸς ἐξηγείτ' ἔχειν, *Soph. Aj.* 319–20). Similarly Heracles in *Trachiniae* describes himself as 'crying like a girl' (ὥστε παρθένος / βέβρυχα κλαίων, 1071–2), and contrasts his previous inability to lament (ἀστένακτος, 1074) with the 'poor female' he is now shown to be (θῆλυς ἡῦρημαι τάλας, 1075). The value placed on bearing one's misfortunes with restraint is highlighted in

extrovert displays of grief by men perfectly acceptable, only that they found extrovert displays of grief by *poetic heroes* acceptable. As he later notes (13), self-control is also praised as a virtue, which suggests a tension between heroic convention and real-life attitudes to grief.

⁶⁶ See Dover (1974) 17–18 on the tension between archaism and anachronism in tragedy.

Euripides' *Heracles*, where Theseus criticizes Heracles for considering suicide rather than enduring his sufferings stoically, and suggests that such an attitude is unworthy of a great hero (1248–50). Nor is this simply an issue of gender, for tragic females too are frequently advised to control their grief. At the end of *Oedipus at Colonus*, the passionate lamentation of Antigone and Ismene is interspersed with the Chorus's advice to endure their suffering bravely (1693–6, 1720–4) and ended by Theseus' rebuke that it is wrong to lament for someone who died a welcome death (1751–3). Similarly, at the end of *Antigone*, the Messenger initially welcomes Eurydice's ominous retreat into the house as a sign that she will mourn her sorrows privately, and suggests that a more public display of mourning would be an 'error' (γνώμης γὰρ οὐκ ἄπειρος, ὥσθ' ἀμαρτάνειν, 1250).

Contemporary discomfort with extreme mourning practices is also reflected in the moralizing remarks made by the chorus or by minor characters. Tragic choruses here as elsewhere act as a voice of moderation, reminding the heroes of received wisdom and acting as a foil to their excesses. Similarly, when messengers report deaths they usually do so as detached observers, and are thus in a position to reflect philosophically in a way we recognize from lyric *thrēnos* or epigrams. So for example the Messenger in *Medea* finishes his description of the deaths of Creon and the princess by musing on the fragility of mortal fortune and the impossibility of obtaining happiness (1224–30), while the Messenger in *Trachiniae* concludes his report of Deianeira's death with a similar *gnōmē* (943–6). Yet while such morals may have been familiar from public funerary poetry, it would be absurd to suggest that they were distinctively funerary features. Moralizing on the inevitability of death or the unpredictability of fortune is common throughout Greek thought and literature, beginning with Homer, and is as much a feature of Pindaric *epinikia* or Herodotean narrative as it is of funeral song. It is possible to flag these ideas as threnodic ones in contexts where they are specifically a response to death. For example, when Cassandra leaves the stage in *Agamemnon*, she announces her desire to give a 'speech or *thrēnos*' (ἅπαξ ἔτ' εἰπεῖν ῥῆσιν ἢ θρῆνον θέλω / ἐμὸν τὸν αὐτῆς, 1322–3) and proceeds to prophesy Clytemnestra's downfall and to offer a general moral on the instability of human life (1327–30). Here the vocabulary used may encourage the audience to connect her

moralizing to the similar themes they may know from traditional lament, but it depends entirely on this explicit genre-reference. Conversely, tragic messengers and choruses offer morals about human fragility not just as a response to death but to any kind of dramatic change in fortune: insisting on a threnodic connection would be spurious.

The difficulty of separating out 'threnodic' motifs makes it problematic to claim that certain passages engage specifically with funerary song rather than Greek morals in general. Equally, the difference between tragic lament and fifth-century funeral practice makes it hard to be sure when tragedy is using mourning in a politicized way, and when it is simply operating within the set of conventions which apply to the poetic world. However, there are instances in tragedy where questions are raised about the propriety of mourning, or the validity of different forms of grief, and where these issues link into the play's wider themes. For the remainder of this chapter, I will explore three such cases: firstly the *Persians*, where the Persian way of grieving is presented as connected to their status as the non-Greek 'other'; secondly Sophocles' *Electra*, where Electra is characterized through her excessive attitude to mourning; and finally *Alcestris*, where Admetus' response to Alcestris' death lies at the ethical heart of the play.

PERSIANS

Aeschylus' *Persians* is a play dominated by grief and lamentation; how we are meant to respond to this grief is a subject of much scholarly debate. In recent years, some scholars have challenged views of the play which see the Persians constructed as alien 'others'; instead they stress the sympathy aroused for them by the prolonged lamentation.⁶⁷ Conversely, others have argued that the Persian lamentation is one of the ways by which the Persians are portrayed as alien, and claim that the play highlights the superiority of Greek

⁶⁷ Cf. Goldhill (1988); Loraux (2002) 45; Dué (2006) 57–90.

values.⁶⁸ In fact, the dichotomy inherent in this debate is an artificial one. It is not the case that if the suffering of the Persians provokes our sympathy the play must challenge Greek ideals, any more than it is the case that we can only sympathize with Sophocles' Ajax or Antigone by seeing them as blameless figures. Rather, just as we can feel great pity for Ajax, yet also understand his culpability in his fate, so too we can sympathize with the Persians' suffering yet recognize the reasons for it. Conversely, seeing an affirmation of Greek values within the play does not require the audience to perceive the Persians as unsympathetic barbarians, any more than understanding how Hippolytus brings about his own downfall requires them to feel no horror at it. As Aristotle noted, the suffering of tragic figures can be more, rather than less, compelling when we are able to understand its reasons (*Poetics* 1452^b–1453^a). Just as the audience can admire or sympathize with a tragic hero yet also see their flaws and understand the reasons for their fall, so too a Greek audience can sympathize with the suffering of the individual Persians yet locate it within a broader moral scheme which explains and justifies their destruction. In this section I will argue that *Persians* uses the theme of lamentation to achieve precisely this outcome. The excessive laments of the Persians are designed to make the audience engage with their suffering, and hence feel pity for them. Yet the lamentation is simultaneously striking for the way it breaks Greek convention, and this transgressive element is used to remind the audience of the differences between Greeks and Persians.⁶⁹

The play contains two formal laments: firstly the Chorus's response to the news of Persian defeat (255–9), secondly the *kommos* between the Chorus and Xerxes (908–1077).⁷⁰ While much of the lamentation is in response to the collapse of Persian power and the humiliation of their defeat, there is also language which is more specifically funerary, and which forms the ritual lamentation for the Persian dead. These funerary overtones become particularly marked in the final *kommos*: the Chorus form an escort, reminiscent of a

⁶⁸ e.g. Hall (1991); Harrison (2000).

⁶⁹ See Pelling (1997) 13–19 for a discussion of how the Persians are presented simultaneously as sympathetic and as alien.

⁷⁰ Cf. Suter (2008) 161.

funeral procession, and their language and gestures reflect ritual mourning practice. Thus the end of the play visually resembles a funeral procession, with Xerxes leading the lament as chief mourner. In fact, however, the procession is formed in response to Xerxes' request that the Chorus should act as his escorts as he has none (1036–8). This highlights the annihilation of the army and reminds the audience that this funeral procession ironically lacks any physical token of the dead it mourns.⁷¹

Whilst we have other plays where the Chorus are primary mourners rather than observers, *Persians* stands out for both the quantity and the emotional intensity of its lamentation. Moreover, the play's setting in the recent past rather than in the world of heroic myth makes this kind of lamentation more shocking, for the audience is encouraged to compare what they see with their own funerary practices.⁷² The unusual quality of the Persians' lament is emphasized in two ways: it is characterized firstly as foreign, secondly as unmanly. Casting the lamentation in this light makes it hard for the audience simply to ascribe the lamentation to tragic convention. Rather, the lament itself becomes used as a filter for exploring differences and continuities between Greeks and Persians.

At various points in the play, the Persians explicitly refer to the foreign nature of their lament, and in doing so encourage the audience to compare what they see to Greek customs. The idea that songs of lamentation came from the east is found regularly in Greek literature: here Aeschylus draws on this belief in order to enhance his portrayal of the Persians as 'other'.⁷³ Thus, for example, as the Chorus welcome Xerxes back to Persia, they describe themselves as singing an eastern song:

πρόσφθογγόν σοι νόστον ταύταν
κακοφάτιδα βοάν, κακομέλετον ἰὰν
Μαριανδυνοῦ θρηνητῆρος
πέμψω πολύδακρυν ἰαχάν. (935–40)

⁷¹ See Seaford (1994) 358; Hall (1996) on 1036.

⁷² Cf. Hall (1996) 169.

⁷³ Cf. Aesch. *Cho.* 423–4; Eur. *IT* 179–84, *Phoen.* 1301–2, *Or.* 1395–9: see Hall (1991) 44, 83–4. Conversely, at Aesch. *Suppl.* 69 the (foreign) Chorus invert the *topos* by describing their grief as 'Ionian song' (Ἰαονίοισι νομοῖσι).

I will send forth an ill-omened shout to greet you on your return, the inauspicious cry of a Mariandynian mourner, a wail accompanied by many tears.

Demonstrative wailing is thus portrayed as something inherently barbarian; in addition, the Chorus encourage the audience to perceive it negatively by stressing its inauspicious nature. Similarly, Xerxes describes the Chorus's lamentation as a 'Mysian song' (τὸ Μύσιον, 1054), once again presenting it as something eastern. Scholars have also discussed the visual and performative aspects of *Persians*, and how movement, costume, music, and dance could have been used to evoke Oriental 'otherness'.⁷⁴ The Messenger and the Chorus name the Persian dead (302–40, 957–1001), and this clustering of foreign names again serves to remind the audience that they are observing alien mourning customs.

A recent article on *Persians* has suggested similarities between the listing of the Persian dead and the naming of the Athenian war dead on casualty lists.⁷⁵ Yet the apparent similarities to the Athenian lists in fact serve to highlight the differences between Athenians and Persians; these Persians are also named because of their aristocratic status and their position as the leaders of the expedition (†τοιῶνδ' ἀρχόντων νῦν† ὑπεμνήσθην πέρι, 329). Thus the epithets that describe them reflect their privileged position, and are words with connotations of aristocratic birth (for example, ἄριστος (306), ἐσθλός (321), ἀγαθός (968), ἄναξ (969), εὐπάτωρ (970)). This practice contrasts sharply with the even-handed treatment of the dead in Athens, where the war dead are celebrated as a unified group, and named as Athenian citizens according to their *phyle*, rather than as part of a particular family.⁷⁶ Many of the Persian dead are described as the leaders of large military units (μυρίας ἔππου βραβεύς (302), χιλίαρχος (304), μυριόνταρχος (314), ἔππου μελαίνης ἡγεμῶν τρισμυρίας (318), πεντήκοντα πεντάκις νεῶν / ταγός (323–4)), and these descriptions allude to the great numbers of rank-and-file Persian dead yet simultaneously remind us that it is only the leaders who

⁷⁴ See Taplin (1977) 61–128; Hall (1991) 79–100.

⁷⁵ Ebbott (2000), who argues that the presentation of the Persian dead is intended to be disturbing in its similarity to Greek models.

⁷⁶ Cf. Loraux (1986) 22; Herrman (2003) 1–2.

are named. Again, this selective commemoration is at odds with Athenian ideology.⁷⁷

Thus the lament serves to remind the Athenian audience of the difference not only in ethnicity but in forms of government between themselves and the Persians: a theme which elsewhere in the play is used to suggest Greek superiority.⁷⁸ For example, the Queen's dream of the two yoked women contrasts Persian subservience with Greek freedom, as the Greek woman refuses to submit to the yoke but instead smashes the chariot (176–99). In her subsequent dialogue with the Chorus, the Queen is unable to understand that the Greeks are not the subjects of a tyrant (*τίς δὲ ποιμάνωρ ἔπεστι κἀπιδεδσπόζει στρατῶ;* 241) and upon learning of Greek freedom her immediate assumption is that it will make them incapable warriors (*πῶς ἂν οὖν μένοιεν ἄνδρας πολεμίους ἐπήλυδας;* 243). Similarly, as the Chorus lament the Persian downfall, they mourn the passing of aspects of Persian rule which the Greeks particularly loathed: the tribute which the subject kingdoms (such as the Ionian Greeks) paid to Persia (*οὐδ' ἔτι δασμοφοροῦσιν / δεσποσύνοισιν ἀνάγκαις*, 586–7) and the Persian practice of prostration, regarded by Greeks as hybristic emulation of the gods (*οὐδ' ἔς γὰν προπίτνοντες / ἄζονται*, 588–9). Among the Chorus's fears about the consequences of the defeat is the introduction of free speech: a Greek ideal presented as a Persian anathema (*οὐδ' ἔτι γλώσσα βροτοῖσιν / ἐν φυλακαῖς· λέλυται γὰρ / λαὸς ἐλεύθερα βάζειν*, 591–3). Thus the Greek audience is reminded of the politically negative aspects of Persian rule, and the mourning strategies of the Persians once again allude to the contrast between Greek freedom and Persian tyranny. The differences between Greek and Persian mourning take on ethical connotations, and we are encouraged to see mourning practices as representative of larger cultural differences.

⁷⁷ Goldhill (1988) also sees the Persian names as creating an antithesis between Greek and Persians, yet regards this antithesis as operating by contrasting the anonymous Greek dead within the play with the named and hence individualistic Persian dead. However, since Athenians did not see naming the war dead as undemocratic (cf. Goldhill (1990) 111), I find the explanation above a more satisfactory way of identifying this antithesis.

⁷⁸ For Persia as a watchword for non-democratic government, see Goldhill (1988); Hall (1991) 54–5, 97–8; Harrison (2000) 76–91.

Cultural differences are often encapsulated by differences in gender roles, and in the case of Persians this is further linked to the stereotype of Orientals as unmanly. While Suter is right to point out that lamentation is not exclusively a female activity in tragedy, in *Persians* emotional displays of grief are presented through feminine imagery, which suggests the real-life association between women and demonstrative lament. The descriptions of mourning focus almost entirely on the bereaved Persian women or on the land of Persia herself, portrayed as a mourning mother (61–4, 122–5, 134–9, 288–9, 537–47, 922–3). By these repeated images of females grieving we are encouraged to perceive lamentation itself, and the ritual gestures which characterize it, as a feminine activity. Yet while we are led to imagine women mourning, it is in fact men who mourn within the action of the play itself, as though the Chorus's lamentations stand for the imaginary cries of the Persian wives and mothers they evoke. The descriptions of female mourning therefore highlight the potentially gendered nature of mourning, and emphasize the oddness of this all-male lament.

The details of the language also evoke mourning practices which are typically female. The Chorus's cries of mourning are regularly described as a *goos*, a word which, despite tragedy's flexibility with mourning-terms, still has particular associations with female lament (545, 687, 697, 1050, 1073).⁷⁹ Moreover, at the end of the play, Xerxes calls upon the Chorus to perform acts of self-mutilation, traditionally the role of women in the pre-Solonian funeral. The Chorus are told to beat their breasts (1046, 1054) and to pluck their hair and beards (1056, 1062). Both these actions are associated with female lament, while the substitution of beards for hair emphasizes the

⁷⁹ γόος is nearly always used of female mourning and is also used metaphorically of the sound of birds which suggests a connection with a high-pitched sound: thus when Electra uses γόος of both male and female cries at Aesch. *Cho.* 502, it is significant that Orestes and Electra are being compared to fledgling birds. The 'female rule' is not absolute, for the word is occasionally used by men to describe their own lamenting (cf. Aesch. *Cho.* 321, *PV* 33; Eur. *Suppl.* 111, *Her.* 1026, *Andr.* 1159), but these are very much the minority. Indeed, in some cases it seems plausible that the word's feminine connotations are relevant to interpreting its use: cf. Aesch. *Seven* 657, Soph. *Aj.* 319, *Trach.* 1199, where γόος is used of and by men to express the idea that mourning is inappropriate; see Derderian (2001) 140.

incongruity of requesting men to perform these rituals. The Chorus are also asked to rip their clothing (1060), an act which Xerxes himself has already performed upon watching the defeat of his army (468, 835–6, 1030, 1042).⁸⁰ Robe-tearing has been prefigured earlier in the play first by the Chorus's metaphor of tearing clothing to represent their mental anguish (115), then by Xerxes' tearing of his robes in his mother's dream (199). Again, we see a transference of typically feminine activities onto male mourners. While Xerxes and the Chorus make no attempt to moderate their grief, a rare note of moderation is introduced by the Queen, when she reminds the Chorus and Messenger that 'it is necessary for mortals to endure the suffering that the gods give' (ὅμως δ' ἀνάγκη πημονὰς βροτοῖς φέρειν / θεῶν διδόντων, 293–4). While this sentiment is a standard *topos* of Greek thought, its presence here takes on additional connotations as we see a female advocating restraint to males, rather than the other way around. Conversely, in the Greek tradition, male forms of lamentation (such as the *thrēnos*) demonstrated a self-controlled and philosophical attitude to grief. Thus the Greek belief that men were capable of more emotional restraint than women is here used to highlight the differences between Greeks and barbarians, as the barbarian males take on female roles and appear incapable of upholding masculine standards of behaviour.⁸¹

The mourning displays of the Persians are thus presented as 'other', reflecting ethnic and gendered differences between Greek and Persian values. The behaviour of the Chorus is important in establishing this, for while tragic characters frequently indulge in extreme lamentation, the Chorus (and particularly male choruses) more often act as a voice of moderation. Rather than offering *gnōmai*, the Chorus in fact join Xerxes in his unrestrained mourning, leaving the words of restraint to the Queen (a female), and to Darius (a foil representing Greek ideals).

⁸⁰ For the importance of robe-tearing, see Taplin (1977) 121.

⁸¹ Suter (2008) 162 uses this passage to argue that gender is not an issue within the play, but does not take seriously the prospect that this is a deliberate inversion of gender norms. However, it seems likely that this is precisely the point of this passage. It is a common Greek strategy to present the gender-roles of foreigners as inverted; hence barbarian women take on masculine characteristics to compensate for the effeminate nature of barbarian men: cf. Hartog (1988) 216–24; Hall (1991) 201–10.

The way that mourning patterns fit into the play's ethical preoccupations is highlighted by how death and lamentation are handled in the Darius scene. Darius acts as the foil to the hybristic and excessive Xerxes, and so, despite being a Persian, within the play he becomes the representative of traditional Greek morals. This status is perhaps made possible by the fact Darius is himself dead: by appearing as a ghost, he has gained access to a level of understanding beyond the mortal sphere, and hence can speak with a moral authority which the other Persians lack. His role encourages the audience to see how Xerxes' downfall fits into a wider pattern of transgression and punishment.⁸² Just as Darius' caution and fear of offending the gods is designed to highlight the arrogance of Xerxes, so too his attitude towards mourning seems designed to make a point:

κλαυμάτων λήξασα τῶνδε καὶ γόων σαφές τί μοι
λέξον· ἀνθρώπεια δ' ἄν τοι πῆματ' ἂν τύχοι βροτοῖς·
πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ θαλάσσης, πολλὰ δ' ἐκ χέρσου κακὰ
γίγνεται θνητοῖς, ὁ μᾶσσων βίोटος ἦν ταθῇ πρόσω (705–8)

Cease your weeping and your lamentations and tell me clearly. Suffering is part of human nature and befalls mankind. For many evils arise from the sea and from the land for mortals, if their lifespan extends far.

Darius thus reminds us of the inevitability of suffering in human life, and the importance of enduring rather than giving way to excessive grief.⁸³ This theme has originally been introduced by the Queen (293–4), and her former husband now in turn reminds her of this moral at the play's philosophical climax, where we are reminded of the theological and moral justification which underpins the Persian disaster.

Darius is quick to condemn the expedition against Greece: his immediate response is to characterize it as foolish (*ἐμώρανεν*, 719). Darius goes on to explain that the Persian defeat is divine punishment

⁸² The theological and ethical importance of the Darius scene has been much discussed: cf. Winnington-Ingram (1983) 1–15; Gagarin (1976) 29–56; Hall (1991) 69–71; Pelling (1997) 14–17. As Saïd (1981) 31–6 notes, the play suppresses Darius' own aggressive policy towards Greece in order to present Darius as a foil to Xerxes.

⁸³ As Saïd (2007) 86–7 notes, the excessive nature of the Persian grief reflects the earlier excesses of their power and decadence; this further establishes a connection between their lament and the play's ethical angle.

ordained by Zeus (739–40), and that it has been brought about through Xerxes' arrogant bridging of the Hellespont, an act which attempts to gain dominion over the gods (744–52). Darius explains that the Persian dominion over Asia is divinely approved (762–4) but that disaster cannot be avoided if the Persians seek to attack Greece (ἐὶ μὴ στρατεύοισθ' ἐς τὸν Ἑλλήνων τόπον, 790). Thus the Persian invasion is not only a tactical error (794) but also a symbolic transgression of the natural boundary between Europe and Asia, and of that between man and god. Moreover, the Persians' behaviour in Greece has merited further divine punishment, because of their sacrilegious desecration of Greek temples (809–12). Darius makes clear that the Persian suffering is therefore justified punishment, and that the army has been lost not simply through misfortune but because of its arrogant and transgressive behaviour:

ὑβρις γὰρ ἐξανθοῦσ' ἐκάρπωσε στάχυν
 ἄτης, ὅθεν πάγκλαυτον ἑξαμῆ θέρος.
 τοιαῦθ' ὁρώντες τῶνδε τὰπιτίμια
 μέμνησθ' Ἀθηνῶν Ἑλλάδος τε, μηδὲ τις
 ὑπερφρονήσας τὸν παρόντα δαίμονα
 ἄλλων ἐρασθεὶς ὄλβον ἐκχέη μέγαν. (821–6)

For when *hybris* blossoms, the fruit it bears is a crop of folly, and the harvest it reaps is one of many tears. Seeing that these things are the punishment for deeds like this, remember Athens and Greece, and let no one squander great wealth by disdaining his present fortune and desiring more.

Thus the Darius scene in general helps the audience to make ethical sense of the play, and prepares us for the sight of the crushed and helpless Xerxes. Coming just before the play's climactic final lamentation, Darius' traditional *gnōmai* remind the audience of their own socially approved way of responding to disaster, and hence stress the differences between Greeks and Persians. Xerxes' lamentations thus seem still more distasteful when set against the conventional way of handling misfortune, and his excessive grieving on-stage reminds the audience of his previous excesses which caused the disaster in the first place. Darius' comments here are thus important in shaping our attitude towards the play's ending. This theme is repeated in Darius' final speech, where he first reminds his listeners of the dangers of arrogance, and then finishes with another *gnōmē* on life and death:

ὑμεῖς δέ, πρέσβεις, χαίρετ', ἐν κακοῖς ὅμως
 ψυχῇ διδόντες ἡδονὴν καθ' ἡμέραν,
 ὥς τοῖς θανούσι πλοῦτος οὐδὲν ὠφελεῖ. (840–2)

But greetings to you, elders, and take pleasure in your heart every day despite your troubles. For wealth is of no benefit to the dead.

Again we see a clustering of Greek ideas. The word *χαίρε* is found in funerary contexts to salute those dead who have gone on to hold special status after death (for example in cult); here Darius, who holds exactly this kind of status, inverts the *topos* by instead saluting the living Persian elders.⁸⁴ The injunction to make the most of life recalls Greek sympotic poetry, where singers draw on the grimness of the underworld in order to encourage their audience to enjoy their present.⁸⁵ Yet while we might expect this moral to appear in a context of celebration, Darius in fact uses it in a time of mourning, in order to remind his listeners of the grim fate that awaits them, and of the importance of making the most of their time on earth despite the suffering it inevitably contains.

Persians therefore demonstrates how funeral ritual can be used to encode the broader normative patterns of a culture. While the play demonstrates a range of differences between Greeks and Persians, funeral lament acts as the filter for understanding them. The Persians' unrestrained lament is not only distasteful in its own right, but also symbolizes the broader faults of *hybris* and lack of moderation which underpin their downfall. While the extreme suffering of the Persians provokes our pity, it is also presented as 'other', linked to females and aliens, and as such problematic. The traditional Greek virtue of self-restraint, central to the lyric *thrēnos*, is within *Persians* demonstrated by Darius' pragmatic approach to the disaster. Yet this philosophical attitude is set in contrast with Persian emotionalism, just as the opening of the play sets Greek freedom in contrast with Persian slavery (189–96, 241–2). Thus the use of funerary motifs in the play is used to enhance the play's broader morality.

⁸⁴ See Sourvinou-Inwood (1995) 180–216 on *χαίρε* to greet the powerful dead (and on its later use in the post-classical period to address any dead person).

⁸⁵ Cf. Mimn. fr. 2 W; Alcaeus fr. 38 V; Simon. fr. 20 W; Theognid. 567–70, 973–8, 1007–12.

SOPHOCLES' *ELECTRA*

The propriety of different forms of mourning is also a theme of Sophocles' *Electra*, another play which foregrounds lamentation.⁸⁶ *Electra* opens with a depiction of the eponymous heroine trapped in a state of permanent mourning, continuing her lamentations long past what is normal or socially approved.⁸⁷ Electra's position in the house is integrally connected with her refusal to give up her grief, which in turn is bound up with her desire for revenge. The first part of the play consists of her explaining and justifying her position to the Chorus, Chrysothemis, and Clytemnestra, before the deadlock is broken by the report of Orestes' death and then by the reunion of the siblings.⁸⁸ Much of the first part of *Electra* is spent discussing responses to grief, and the troubled house of Atreus is used as a filter for demonstrating negative paradigms of mourning.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ For the interplay of life and death as a theme in the play, see Segal (1966).

⁸⁷ See Hutchinson (1999) 51–4 on how Sophocles portrays Electra as caught in a prolonged and imperfective state.

⁸⁸ The extent to which Sophocles encourages us to feel horror at the matricide is much debated: see Wright (2005*b*) 172 nn. 1 and 3 and Finglass (2007*a*) 8–9 for a catalogue of bibliography supporting both 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' readings. Whilst I agree with Finglass that it is oversimplistic to insist on fitting the play into one or either of these models, I tend to come down more on the side of the 'pessimists', as will become apparent from my reading below. It is true that the killing is presented with less obvious revulsion than in the other Atreid plays, but matricide was indisputably a horrific crime and it is hard to argue that an Athenian audience would have regarded it without qualms, while tit-for-tat vengeance itself is regarded as problematic within a fifth-century context (cf. Allan (forthcoming *b*)). Moreover, references to the chariot race of Pelops (502–15) and to the Erinyes (112, 276, 491) seem a typically Sophoclean way of alluding to the audience's knowledge of the past and future and thus hint at the problematic ramifications of the vengeance.

⁸⁹ The perversion of funerary ritual has been well discussed by Seaford (1985), to whose discussion I am indebted. Yet while I agree with Seaford's analysis of the linguistic clues and details, I find his analysis places the blame too firmly with Clytemnestra. As I argue below, the play encourages us to see how Electra colludes in the breakdown of norms within the Atreid house, and while her actions may be more understandable and less repellent than those of Clytemnestra, she is no less culpable in the decisions she takes.

Electra as perpetual mourner

The portrayal of Electra as a mourner begins before she appears, with her off-stage cries of lament (77). Upon entering her first words make clear the repeated and indefinite nature of her mourning as she recalls her repeated laments:

ὦ φάος ἄγνόν
καὶ γῆς ἰσόμοιρ' ἄήρ, ὥς μοι
πολλὰς μὲν θρήνων ᾤδάς,
πολλὰς δ' ἀντήρεις ἦσθου
στέρνων πλαγὰς αἵμασσομένων,
ὅπότεν δνοφερὰ νύξ ὑπολειφθῇ. (86–91)

O holy light and air, equal partner in earth, how many dirge-songs, how many blows against my bloodied chest have you heard each time dusky night is left behind.

Electra thus describes herself as caught in a perpetual process of solitary mourning, its prolonged nature evoked by the indefinite construction in 91. Her description of *thrēnoi* and self-mutilation evoke the *prothesis*, the first and most emotional phase of mourning. Solon's legislation limited the *prothesis* to a single day, which suggests that prolonging this element of mourning had been particularly disruptive. Even before the funerary reforms, the *prothesis* still occurred within set boundaries: for example, Priam requests nine days of lamentation for Hector (Hom. *Il.* 24.664), while the mourning for Achilles lasted for seventeen days (Hom. *Od.* 24.63). In both these cases the *prothesis* is lengthy to reflect the greatness of the dead man, but it nevertheless lasts for an agreed period of time at the end of which the funeral itself takes place. The completion of the funeral is envisaged as a way of letting the dead go: hence Patroclus' ghost rebukes Achilles for his failure to bury him and sees it as a form of neglect (*Il.* 23.69–71). Equally, the funeral allows the mourners to move on to a different stage of the grieving process, facilitating their reassimilation into the world of the living.⁹⁰ Electra's

⁹⁰ For the funeral as negotiating the boundary between living and dead, see Sourvinou-Inwood (1983) 38–42, and Hertz (1960) for a broader anthropological perspective. Plut. *Lyc.* 27 describes the end of the prescribed period of mourning in Sparta as being an occasion for 'dissolving the suffering' (λύειν τὸ πάθος).

indefinite repetition of the first stages of mourning is therefore indicative of her inability to move on from the past, and as such marks her grief out as socially abnormal.⁹¹

Indeed, Electra goes on to make it clear that she has no intention of leaving off her mourning:

ἀλλ' οὐ μὲν δὴ
 λήξω θρήνων στυγερῶν τε γόων,
 ἔστ' ἂν παμφεγγεῖς ἄστρον
 ῥιπᾶς, λεύσσω δὲ τόδ' ἡμαρ,
 μὴ οὐ τεκνολέτειρ' ὥς τις ἀηδῶν
 ἐπὶ κωκυτῷ τῶνδε πατρῶων
 πρὸ θυρῶν ἦχῳ πᾶσι προφωνεῖν. (103–9)

But I shall not cease from my dirges and wretched laments as long as I look on the radiant twinkling of the stars or upon this daylight, like that child-killer the nightingale I will wail before the doors of my father and cry out to everyone.

Electra's refusal to set any limits on her grief would be disturbing to a contemporary audience, for it casts her mourning as something outside the bounds of social regulation. This note of concern is enhanced by the simile of the nightingale. The simile draws on the convention of comparing female lamentation to bird cries, and the nightingale is a common analogue for mourning.⁹² Here, however, the epithet *τεκνολέτειρ'* ('child-killer') evokes the nightingale's problematic past, and we are invited to recall that the person she mourns is the son she herself murdered.⁹³ This story of intra-familial wrongdoing and vengeance mirrors the history of the Atreid house, for Procne, like Electra, is both a victim of a crime and a perpetrator of further wrongdoing. Casting Electra as Procne is therefore troubling for it undermines her self-presentation as pitiful victim and instead

⁹¹ Cf. Seaford (1985) 316.

⁹² For female grief as birdsong, cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 1444–6; Soph. *Ant.* 466–7; Eur. *El.* 151–6, *Hec.* 146–8, *Hel.* 1107–11; Arnould (1990) 145; Derderian (2001) 25. For the nightingale in tragedy see Kannicht (1969) and Allan (2008) on Eur. *Hel.* 1107–12.

⁹³ The myth was dramatized in Sophocles' *Tereus* (frs. 580–95b Radt), and used aetiologically to explain the nightingale's song elsewhere in tragedy (cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 1142–5; Eur. *Phaeth.* 67–70). For a discussion of the myth and its sociological and religious meanings, see Burkert (1983) 179–85.

portrays her as a murderous figure, foreshadowing the killing of Clytemnestra.⁹⁴ The nightingale simile thus alludes to the destructive potential inherent in Electra's grief, and encourages us to perceive it not simply as an understandable response to her situation but as a problematic attitude which may lead to violence.

The *kommos*

The interchange with the Chorus which follows makes the transgressive nature of Electra's position still clearer. Helene Foley's analysis of lamentation in *Electra* sees the choral *kommos* as the formation of a female axis, whereby the Chorus, despite their initial reservations, come to be fully identified with Electra and her motivations.⁹⁵ In fact, however, the Chorus's reservations and moralizing platitudes are of central importance for they serve to remind the audience of the socially approved attitude towards grief and mourning, and hence underscore Electra's isolation from the norms of Greek society.⁹⁶ In analysing the *kommos* it is important to note that the Chorus is sympathetic to Electra from the start. They begin by making it clear that they believe Agamemnon's murder to have been a wicked act (ἀθεώτατα, 124, κακὰ τε χειρὶ πρόδοτον, 126) and that vengeance is justified (ὥς ὁ τάδε πορῶν / ὅλοιτ', 126–7). Throughout the interchange we see evidence of mutual respect and fondness between Electra and the Chorus: Electra's first words to them are to describe them as 'descendants of noble ones' (ὦ γενέθλα γενναίων, 129), and she goes on to note their kindness and loyalty (ἀλλ' ὦ παντοίας φιλότῆτος ἀμειβόμεναι χάριν, 134). Similarly the Chorus repeatedly address Electra as 'child' (τέκνον, 154, 174, παῖ, 251), and make explicit the motherly concern they feel for her (ἀλλ' οὖν ἐννοίᾳ γ' αὐδῶ, / μάτηρ ὥσεί τις πιστά, 'I speak to you in loyalty, like a

⁹⁴ Cf. Finglass (2007a) on 107; Allan (forthcoming b).

⁹⁵ Foley (2001) 149, 157; cf. March (2001) on 251–3.

⁹⁶ Gould (2001) 95 notes the difference in values between Electra and the Chorus, though he does not suggest one view would be privileged over the other by an Athenian audience.

trustworthy mother', 233–4). Yet the expression of this emotional closeness merely highlights the philosophical distance between Electra and the Chorus, as both protagonist and Chorus use the language of trust and friendship in order to express the incomprehension they feel at the other's position. The Chorus's self-presentation as mother-figures is also a way of claiming their philosophical superiority, for by stressing their superior age and wisdom they gain the right to educate Electra. Their use of this maternal language thus ties in with their use of conventional wisdom, and reminds the audience of the traditional nature of their arguments. Conversely, Electra does not acknowledge the gap in age and wisdom which the Chorus suggest, instead referring to them as *γενέθλα* (129, 226), a term which does not imply any generational differentiation. So even within the warm language used by both parties, we see an underlying debate as the Chorus seek to claim a moral authority and Electra refuses to accept it.

Despite the Chorus's obvious loyalty to Electra, they also make it clear that Electra's perpetual grieving is inappropriate. Their opening words question why Electra continues to lament, describing her cries as 'insatiable' (*ἀκόρεστον*, 123). When describing Agamemnon's death they remind her that it occurred long ago (*πάλαι*, 124), implying that the appropriate period for mourning has now passed. The Chorus go on to utter a range of traditional consolations, reminiscent of the lyric *thrēnos* as well as familiar from other sources.⁹⁷ They first tell Electra that grieving cannot bring back the dead and that death comes to all (137–9). When this argument is rejected they tell her that she is not the first to suffer in this way, mentioning her sister Chrysothemis, who, as we later see, exhibits a more restrained attitude to her grief (153–7). Finally, they remind her of the justice of the gods (173–84) and of the necessity of enduring what one cannot change (219–20). These conventional responses to death are set against Electra's own attitude, which is portrayed as dangerous and self-destructive: they tell her that she is 'abandoning moderation in her immense grief and destroying herself with mourning' (*ἀλλ' ἀπὸ*

⁹⁷ Cf. Burton (1980) 191. Cropp (1988) 113 also comments on the conventionality of the Chorus's lines (comparing them to the Chorus of Eur. *El.*), though he does not agree that the Chorus's ideas carry normative power within the plays.

τῶν μετρίων ἐπ' ἀμήχανον / ἄλγος ἀεὶ στενάχουσα διόλλυσαι, 140–1), and later criticize her for 'falling disgracefully like this into home-made ruin' (οἰκείας εἰς ἄτας / ἐμπίπτεις οὕτως αἰκῶς, 215–16).

Electra responds to the Chorus's traditional attitude by insisting on her right to lament Agamemnon indefinitely, though she does so in a way which recognizes that her behaviour might be thought inappropriate:

οἶδά τε καὶ ξυνίημι τάδ', οὗ τί με
φυγγάνει, οὐδ' ἐθέλω προλιπεῖν τόδε,
μὴ οὐ τὸν ἐμὸν στενάχουν πατέρ' ἄθλιον. (131–3)

I know and understand these things, it does not escape me, but I do not want to abandon it and not to lament my poor father.

Similarly, later in the *kommos* Electra accepts the serious charge of *atē* levelled against her by the Chorus (215); indeed, rather than expressing shame or horror at this state of *atē*, she glories in it and refuses to give it up (ἀλλ' ἐν γὰρ δεινοῖς οὐ σχήσω / ταύτας ἄτας, 223–4). Electra nevertheless maintains that she is morally justified in continuing with her laments, arguing that 'he is foolish who forgets parents who died piteously' (νήπιος ὃς τῶν οἰκτρῶς / οἰχομένων γονέων ἐπιλάθεται, 145–6), and suggesting that it would be dishonourable not to lament Agamemnon (236–44).⁹⁸ She once more compares herself to the nightingale (147–9), and also addresses Niobe, claiming her as an example of eternal mourning:

ὡς παντλάμων Νιόβα, σέ δ' ἔγωγε νέμω θεόν,
ἅτ' ἐν τάφῳ πετραίῳ,
αἰαί, δακρύεις. (150–2)

Oh, Niobe who suffered every sorrow, I consider you to be a goddess, for you weep, alas, in your rocky tomb.

⁹⁸ As Finglass (2007a) notes on 145–52, however, '[Electra] does not merely remember her dead father, as an ordinary person might: she has devoted her existence to a constant process of keeping alive the memory of his suffering.' Thus Electra's appeal to standard morality rings hollow, for her idea of honouring Agamemnon goes far beyond the socially approved norms.

Both Procne and Niobe are examples of women who are transformed and dehumanized by their suffering, and their physical metamorphosis actualizes the mental isolation which Electra feels. Electra, moreover, emphasizes the continual nature of Niobe's grief, alluding to the myth that she was turned into a rock whose dripping stream symbolized her sorrow.⁹⁹ Yet using Niobe as a parallel for grief would also remind a fifth-century audience of the famous use of Niobe in *Iliad* 24, where Achilles cites her as an example of someone who recognized the importance of enduring and returning to human society (through eating) despite her immense suffering (24.602–17). Electra's use of Niobe to justify her right not to abandon her grief would therefore resonate oddly with Sophocles' audience, who were familiar with her story being used to support the opposite moral.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, the Chorus respond to Electra's evocation of Niobe by reminding her that she is not the first to have suffered (οὔτοι σοὶ μούνα, / τέκνον, ἄχος ἐφάνη βροτῶν, 153–4), suggesting an affinity between her and the mythological paradigms she cites. Their use of the word βροτῶν is conventional theology, yet also reflects Electra's earlier θεόν to describe Niobe (150). The Chorus thus correct Electra, reminding her that just as Niobe was not a god (and so had to come to terms with grief), so she too is a mortal, and so must accept suffering as part of life.¹⁰¹ This moral is further suggested by Electra's use of the epithet παντράμων to describe Niobe (150): a word which she seems to use to refer to Niobe's great suffering, yet which can also refer to the endurance of suffering.

Throughout the *kommos*, we therefore see undertones of conflict between Electra and the Chorus, as the Chorus's use of traditional

⁹⁹ For the Niobe myth see Forbes Irving (1990) 293–7. As March (2001) on 147–52 notes, Niobe's fate is later evoked by Chrysothemis' report that Aegisthus and Clytemnestra intend to imprison Electra (379–82).

¹⁰⁰ Similarly in Aeschylus' *Niobe*, the play opened with Niobe's silence (representing her continual grief: see Taplin (1972) 60–2) yet finished with her returning home to Lydia, presumably symbolizing an acceptance that her mourning must come to an end: see Cropp (2005) 276.

¹⁰¹ As Finglass (2007a) notes on 150 (and *pace* March (2001)), Electra's portrayal of Niobe as a god is in itself troubling, for while she regards Niobe's freedom from moderation as divine, in fact gods are portrayed as untouched by mortal cares.

funerary consolation undermines Electra's insistence on her perpetual grief.¹⁰² Far from assimilating their view with that of Electra, the Chorus maintain this traditional line throughout the scene, culminating in a passionate interchange dominated by imperatives, where each party demands that the other yield to their viewpoint. Thus the Chorus warn Electra to be silent (*φράζου μὴ πόρσω φωνεῖν*, 213), criticize her for her own role in perpetuating her suffering (214–19), and conclude with the command *τλᾶθι* ('endure!' 220). Electra responds equally firmly by insisting that she cannot be comforted and commands the Chorus to leave her in peace (*ἄνετέ μ' ἄνετε παράγοροι*, 229). She notes their attempt at consolation, and rebuts it by asserting in still stronger language that she can never be placated:

*τάδε γὰρ ἄλυτα κεκλήσεται·
οὐδέ ποτ' ἐκ καμάτων ἀποπαύσομαι
ἀνάριθμος ὧδε θρήνων.* (230–2)

These things shall be called indissoluble. I will never cease from my distress, and my dirges shall be beyond numbering.

In response to Electra's increasing passion the Chorus remind her gently of their care for her (*εὐνοίᾳ γ' αὐδῶ*, 233), yet still maintain that her grieving is a destructive force (*μὴ τίκτειν σ' ἄταν ἄταις*, 235). When Electra still refuses to moderate her position, the Chorus then put an end to the discussion:

*ἐγὼ μέν, ὦ παῖ, καὶ τὸ σὸν σπεύδουσ' ἅμα
καὶ τοῦμόν αὐτῆς ἦλθον· εἰ δὲ μὴ καλῶς
λέγω, σὺ νίκα· σοὶ γὰρ ἐψόμεσθ' ἅμα.* (251–3)

My child, I have come eagerly seeking your interests and my own too. But if what I say is not good, you win. We will follow you.

We should see this not as sincere capitulation by the Chorus to Electra's viewpoint, but rather as a polite way of putting an end to the debate, having recognized that neither party is able to persuade the other of their position.¹⁰³ The Chorus remind Electra of their

¹⁰² Cf. Burton (1980) 188–92.

¹⁰³ Cf. Burton (1980) 195 and Finglass (2007a) on 233, who sees the Chorus as acting 'as if anxious that the argument should not become a fully-fledged confrontation'.

loyalty, and make it clear that they intend to support her despite their previous disagreement. Similarly, Electra responds to them by acknowledging a sense of *aidōs* at how her behaviour might be viewed, and begs the Chorus to understand her position:

αἰσχύνομαι μέν, ὧ γυναῖκες, εἰ δοκῶ
πολλοῖσι θρήνοις δυσφορεῖν ὑμῖν ἄγαν.
ἀλλ' ἡ βία γὰρ ταῦτ' ἀναγκάζει με δρᾶν,
σύγγνωτε. (254–7)

I feel shame, women, if I seem to you to be bearing this excessively badly with my many dirges. But a violent compulsion forces me to do this, so forgive me.

Like the Chorus, Electra's words are almost an apology for her previous attitude. Just as they concede that they will not convince her (252–3), she too recognizes that she might be seen to be reacting inappropriately. The *kommos* thus showcases the opposed attitudes of Electra and the Chorus towards different forms of mourning, and sets Electra's extreme emotions against the Chorus's traditional strategies of consolation. After the end of the *kommos*, both parties agree to draw a veil over their previous disagreement, and do so by conceding the possibility that they might be viewed negatively and by expressing their fondness for the other. The Chorus agrees to yield to Electra in order to better support her, yet this does not imply that they are convinced by her arguments. The abiding impression we are left with is of the incompatibility between these two world-views.

Clytemnestra and the perversion of mourning

Set against Electra's excessive mourning is the no less disturbing attitude of Clytemnestra. While Electra sustains her mourning far beyond the appropriate timescale, Clytemnestra is incapable of grieving to an adequate level in the first place.¹⁰⁴ This motif is introduced

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Seaford (1985) 317: '[Electra] must respond to the perverted and protracted rites of her mother with anomalously protracted lamentation of her own'.

before Clytemnestra's entry, as Electra describes her outrage at the state of the house of Atreus. We see a mirroring of the Chorus's own gnomic language when Electra repeats Clytemnestra's advice to her:

αὕτη γὰρ ἢ λόγοισι γενναία γυνή
 φωνοῦσα τοιάδ' ἔξονειδίξει κακά,
 “ὦ δύσθεον μίσσημα, σοὶ μόνη πατὴρ
 τέθνηκεν; ἄλλος δ' οὔτις ἐν πένθει βροτῶν;
 κακῶς ὄλοιο, μηδέ σ' ἐκ γόων ποτέ
 τῶν νῦν ἀπαλλάξειαν οἱ κάτω θεοί.” (287–92)

For she, that allegedly noble woman, speaks as follows: ‘You hateful cursed thing, are you the only person whose father has died? Is there no other mortal who feels grief? May you die horribly, and may the gods of the underworld never release you from your lamentations.’

Once we look past Clytemnestra's hostile language, we see that she deploys the same traditional advice as the Chorus have offered Electra: she should recall that she is not the only person to have suffered bereavement and so should moderate her response.¹⁰⁵ Yet while the Chorus offer this moral as a form of consolation, Clytemnestra appropriates it as a form of abuse. We therefore see traditional threnodic *consolatio* perverted to be a means of making the addressee suffer more rather than less. Moreover, Clytemnestra uses the moral to wish that Electra may never be released from her mourning, again the opposite effect to its normal usage. The *gnōmē* thus stands out for its incongruity; Clytemnestra's wish appears illogical since it follows on from a consolation which ought to make Electra less inclined to grieve. Moreover, Clytemnestra's description glosses over the horror of her actions. By speaking to Electra with the language of typical consolation, she implies that Electra's situation is a typical one, yet the audience is aware that Electra's loss is far more disturbing than a normal bereavement. For Clytemnestra's description of Agamemnon's death (τέθνηκεν) leaves its causes unstated, but if we supply them (his murder at the hands of his wife), it becomes clear that the situation is far from ordinary.

Clytemnestra's perversion of the traditional forms of mourning is further suggested by her funeral offerings to Agamemnon. Whilst

¹⁰⁵ The parallel to traditional *consolatio* is noted by Seaford (1985) 317.

superficially a way of honouring the deceased, the meaning of these libations is undermined by their context, for Clytemnestra offers them not as a bereaved party but as the killer. The incongruity of her offering is immediately highlighted, as Electra expresses her surprise that Clytemnestra would pour libations to her enemy (*ἡ τῷ δυσμενεστάτῳ βροτῶν*, 407), and Chrysothemis replies by clarifying exactly what Electra is alluding to (*ὃν ἔκταν' αὐτῇ· τοῦτο γὰρ λέξαι θέλεις*, 'the man she killed—that's what you mean', 408). Chrysothemis explains that Clytemnestra is motivated by her nightmares, and again traditional funerary ritual is subverted in order to highlight Clytemnestra's crimes: libations no longer represent a way of honouring the dead but rather remind us of Clytemnestra's dishonouring of her husband and the grievance he has against her.¹⁰⁶ As Electra points out, for Clytemnestra, libations are not a legitimate way of expressing grief but instead act as a reminder of the wrongs she has committed (438–41). To convince Chrysothemis of this point, Electra recalls the outrages performed on Agamemnon's corpse: *ἐμασχαλίσθη καπὶ λουτροῖσιν κάρῃ / κηλίδας ἐξέμαξεν* (445–6). The act of wiping off the bloodstains is thus described as a perversion of the funeral bath which the women of the household would be expected to perform.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, whereas Greek custom required that the relatives of the deceased visited his tomb, Clytemnestra instead institutes a ritual to commemorate Agamemnon's death through celebration rather than mourning (277–81). Clytemnestra's empty attempt to manipulate funerary ritual only highlights the paradox inherent in her position: having murdered her husband, whether she performs funeral rites or fails to perform them, she will nevertheless dishonour the dead man.

The reported death of Orestes creates a similar dilemma, for as Clytemnestra notes, she can neither legitimately grieve nor rejoice (*πότερον εὐτυχῇ λέγω, / ἢ δεινὰ μέν, κέρδη δέ;* 766–7). As she leaves the stage, Electra criticizes her for gloating rather than mourning Orestes' death (804–7). Electra then goes on to deliver a lament for Orestes which evokes traditional female forms of mourning. Like Hecuba or Helen in the *Iliad*, she begins by addressing Orestes with a

¹⁰⁶ Cf. also Aesch. *Cho.* 44–53, 84–105.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Seaford (1985) 316.

term of affection (Ὁρέστα φίλταθ', 808), before going on to express the terrible impact that his death will have on her life. Electra's lament is conventional, yet it stands out coming as it does immediately after her observation that Orestes' mother rejoices in his death. Thus the perversion of mourning practices within the Atreid house echoes the perversion in familial roles, where wife is set against husband, and children against mother. This theme is further evoked in Electra's later lament over Orestes' ashes, where she recalls their previous relationship in terms that encapsulate the breakdown within her family:

οὔτε γάρ ποτε
μητρὸς σύ γ' ἦσθα μᾶλλον ἢ καμοῦ φίλος,
οὔθ' οἱ κατ' οἶκον ἦσαν ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τροφός,
ἐγὼ δ' ἀδελφῇ σοὶ προσσηδῶμην αἰεί. (1145–8)

You were never beloved of your mother more than of me, and it was not the servants in the house but I who was your nurse; I was always addressed as sister by you.

While Electra's words affirm her right to take on the role of primary mourner, they also emphasize the flawed dynamics within the household: Clytemnestra through her murder of her husband has lost her right to care for her son, while Electra has taken on the role of nurse, acting not only as a surrogate mother but also as a servant. Again, ritual lament is used as a filter to express the broader problems of the house. The perversion of this lament is further indicated by the absence of Orestes' body. Electra perceives this as nullifying her laments, for despite her own mourning of Orestes (808–22) and the antiphonal interchange with the Chorus (823–68), she concludes that Orestes has received 'no funeral or lament from us' (οὔτε του τάφου ἀντιάσας / οὔτε γόων παρ' ἡμῶν, 869–70).

Seaford is right, then, to see Clytemnestra's perversion of ritual as a counterpoint to that of Electra, whereby both women transgress ritual boundaries yet do so in an opposing manner. Yet the picture Sophocles paints is more nuanced than simply portraying Electra's behaviour as a response forced upon her by Clytemnestra. Through the figure of Chrysothemis we are reminded that Electra has an

alternative choice on how to behave. And whether or not we prefer Electra's idealistic attachment to her principles or Chrysothemis' pragmatic attitude, Chrysothemis demonstrates the existence of a 'third way', where Clytemnestra's crimes need not lead to further transgression of social boundaries. Electra may describe herself as simply responding to her circumstances, but the bankruptcy of this rhetoric is exposed by Clytemnestra's use of the same strategy to defend her murder of Agamemnon (528–51). Rather, the theme of perverted funerary ritual in Clytemnestra and Electra's actions draws our attention to the essential similarity between mother and daughter, both of whom cling to retaliatory violence as the only resolution for the wrongs done to them.¹⁰⁸ Retribution is presented as inherently linked to Electra's mourning, and we are repeatedly told that it is only the return of Orestes and the prospect of vengeance which can bring her comfort (117–20, 160–3, 303–4, 453–8). Electra's laments echo the ritual tradition whereby the mourner laments the impact the death has had upon her own life, but in Electra's case she mourns not only for her suffering but for the lost prospect of vengeance (810–12, 1154–7). Yet her viewpoint essentially resembles that of Clytemnestra, who perceives her killing of Agamemnon as the only form of justice for the loss of Iphigeneia: an argument which, as Electra notes, justifies her own murder (582–3). Electra attacks Clytemnestra for her ethical stance, and denies that this constituted an adequate reason for killing Agamemnon:

εἰ δ' οὖν, ἔρῳ γὰρ καὶ τὸ σόν, κείνον θέλων
 ἐπωφελῆσαι ταῦτ' ἔδρα, τούτου θανείν
 χρῆν αὐτὸν οὐνεκ' ἐκ σέθεν; ποίῳ νόμῳ;
 ὅρα τιθεῖσα τόνδε τὸν νόμον βροτοῖς
 μὴ πῆμα σαρτῇ καὶ μετ'άγνοιαν τίθης. (577–81)

But even if [Agamemnon] did do this [killing Iphigeneia] intending to help him [Menelaus], for I will give your side of the story too, was that a reason for him to have to die at your hands? By what law? Watch out that by setting down this law for mankind you are not setting down suffering and regret for yourself.

¹⁰⁸ For the similarity between Clytemnestra and Electra, cf. Friis Johansen (1964) 17; Wright (2005b) 182.

Electra thus accuses Clytemnestra of instituting a new form of morality whereby anyone who has committed a murder must himself die for his actions, and suggests that this is not a valid system. Yet by setting up the vengeance of Orestes as the only end-point for her grief, Electra in fact demonstrates her own commitment to the same moral system.¹⁰⁹ The similarity of outlook between mother and daughter is further suggested by Clytemnestra's claim to speak on behalf of the dead Iphigeneia (φαίη δ' ἂν ἡ θανούσά γ', εἰ φωνήν λάβοι, 548), which echoes Electra's dismissal of Chrysothemis' claim to speak on Agamemnon's behalf (402–3), and her own belief that she is able to correctly interpret the desire of the dead for vengeance. Electra's own violent potential is made explicit by her suggestion that she and Chrysothemis should take matters into their own hands and exact vengeance themselves (947–89).¹¹⁰ Thus, the more that the play encourages us to perceive the vengeance as morally justified, the more dubious Electra's own position becomes, for in her jubilation at the end of the play she becomes worryingly similar to her mother as she gloried over Agamemnon's death.¹¹¹

The play thus uses grief and mourning to explore the issue of justice, and to characterize both Electra and Clytemnestra. Excessive

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Kells (1973) on 582–3. For the moral similarities between Electra and Clytemnestra's positions, see Winnington-Ingram (1954–5) 22; Friis Johansen (1964) 19; Blundell (1989) 149–83; Cairns (1993) 241–9. Other scholars have rejected this interpretation (cf. Stinton (1986) 76–7; Burnett (1998) 137; MacLeod (2001) 87–9), wanting to separate Electra's motivations from those of Clytemnestra (see Finglass (2007a) on 577–83 for a discussion). This tendency in scholarship is, I suspect, driven by the underlying belief that since Electra is fundamentally a more sympathetic character than Clytemnestra, her actions must be more justifiable. However, this does not follow, for we can sympathize with a tragic character (as indeed the play expects us to do in the case of Electra) yet still recognize that their actions are morally problematic, just as we can loathe a character (as we may well in the case of Clytemnestra) yet still feel concern about the method of their downfall.

¹¹⁰ As Wheeler (2003) 378–9 argues, Electra's language here is troublingly masculine; even though she does not ultimately go through with this plan, merely suggesting it is indicative of a transgressive attitude. Electra and Clytemnestra are also both figures whose sexuality has become distorted: the former a *parthenos* who has failed to make the transition to maturity, the latter an adulteress, both women whose sexuality society has failed to regulate.

¹¹¹ For the disturbing nature of Electra's joy, see Wright (2005b).

mourning is portrayed as inextricably linked to tit-for-tat violence: a moral which, as Foley notes, confirmed contemporary Athenian restrictions on funeral practice.¹¹² Yet Electra's mourning is not exactly a causal factor in determining the vengeance (for the play makes clear that Orestes is resolved on the killing before we even see Electra). Rather, the perversion of ritual, here as in many plays, acts as a symbol of the perversion of actual relationships and practices which we see enacted. The connection between grief and vengeance is disturbing, for it contradicts the traditional model whereby mourning is naturally ended after a certain passage of time. Electra's defiance of the conventional mode of lamentation not only serves to characterize her as an extreme figure, but also indicates the play's wider concerns, and the destructive effects that such transgressive figures can achieve.¹¹³

ALCESTIS

Alcestis is, more than any other tragedy, a study of how to respond to death.¹¹⁴ The eponymous heroine dies less than halfway into the play and her death is presented as a *fait accompli* from the opening; there is none of the suspense of *Ajax* or *Antigone* where we see the characters making the choices that will lead to their destruction. Despite the ultimately happy ending, the focus is on Admetus' grief and the moral difficulties he faces as a survivor.¹¹⁵ As in Sophocles' *Electra*, we see the Chorus being used to reflect the traditional wisdom of funerary poetry, and their advice is set against Admetus' refusal to moderate his grief. Moreover, the basic premiss of *Alcestis* sets up an easy way to introduce tension into traditional mourning language, for we are

¹¹² Foley (2001) 151–7.

¹¹³ For *Electra* as a distortion of normative roles and structures, see also Segal (1981) 249–91; Wheeler (2003).

¹¹⁴ Cf. Segal (1992).

¹¹⁵ Burnett (1965) 240–1 argues that we are discouraged from thinking about Admetus' choice, and hence that he is not portrayed as culpable or cowardly: however, the *agōn* scene (614–740) seems to achieve precisely this purpose.

constantly reminded that Admetus is no ordinary bereaved husband, but in fact the cause of his wife's death.¹¹⁶ The play thus presents us with a case-study of how to respond to death, which uses an extreme and implausible situation as a foil for more general issues of grief and commemoration.¹¹⁷

The manipulation of funerary convention begins with the death-scene, where we find traditional language and ritual deployed in a way that draws the audience's attention to the unusual nature of Alcestis' death. Thus, for example, the Servant describes Alcestis herself bathing and adorning her body, rituals which would normally be performed on her corpse by her relatives (159–61). Similarly, on Alcestis' appearance the Chorus describe her as being conveyed out of the house (ἡδ' ἐκ δόμων δὴ καὶ πόσις πορεύεται, 233), a phrasing which evokes the *ekphora*, yet comes in a context when Alcestis is still alive.¹¹⁸ The laments of Admetus and the child evoke the ritual lamentation at the *prothesis*, but the death and the mourning are brought outside the house, in defiance of Athenian law.¹¹⁹ Alcestis herself is not only involved in the mourning but also participates in the praise of her good character, announcing that she is the best of wives and of mothers (σοὶ μὲν, πόσι, / γυναῖκ' ἀρίστην ἔστι κομπάσαι λαβεῖν, / υἱὸν δέ, παῖδες, μητρὸς ἐκπεφυκέναι, 323–5). Alcestis' participation in her own funerary ritual highlights the choice she has made, and so draws attention to her altruism in dying on her husband's behalf. Yet this blurring of the boundary between living and dead is also disturbing, and Alcestis' participation in her own

¹¹⁶ Lloyd (1985) 123 argues that since Alcestis' death is portrayed as a normal death, Admetus' laments are just as appropriate as (and no more hypocritical than) any other lament. However, this argument overlooks the excessive nature of Admetus' laments, and the difference between his attitude and the approved forms of mourning (discussed below): cf. Nielsen (1976); Bradley (1980).

¹¹⁷ Cf. Gregory (1979) 260: 'the play should be viewed against the background of traditional literary assumptions about death'.

¹¹⁸ As Parker (2007) on 233–4 notes, the singular verb also focuses our attention on Alcestis rather than the family group as a whole. As well as indicating Alcestis' importance, this emphasis is also appropriate for a funeral context where the corpse rather than the mourners is the focus of attention.

¹¹⁹ As Hamilton (1978) 294 notes, Alcestis' death on-stage is startling as it breaks the tragic convention that characters die off-stage; in addition, the fact that Alcestis is brought outside to die and be mourned rather than being kept within the house represents a breaking of real-life conventions as well as dramatic ones.

death ritual thus foreshadows the later debate as to whether Admetus has acted rightly.¹²⁰

Admetus and the Chorus

As in Sophocles' *Electra*, the theme of appropriate mourning is developed through the contrast between the attitude of the main character and that of the Chorus. From Admetus' first speech, we are shown that his views on how to demonstrate his grief are out of the ordinary.¹²¹ Admetus begins by responding to Alcestis' request that he should not take a new wife and reassures her that he will remain single. He then goes on to describe the mourning rituals he will observe to honour Alcestis after her death. First, he announces his intention to mourn Alcestis for the rest of his life, and to hate his parents for her sake:

οἴσω δὲ πένθος οὐκ ἐτήσιον τὸ σὸν
ἀλλ' ἔστ' ἄν αἰὼν οὐμὸς ἀντέχῃ, γύναι,
στρυγὼν μὲν ἢ μ' ἔτικτεν, ἐχθαίρων δ' ἐμὸν
πατέρα· λόγῳ γὰρ ἦσαν οὐκ ἔργῳ φίλοι. (336–9)

I will bear this grief for you not only for a year but for however long my life endures, my wife, and I will hate the woman who gave birth to me, and loathe my father. For they have proved to be loved ones in word but not in deed.

Like *Electra*, Admetus refuses to accept the importance of giving up grief and perceives his perpetual mourning as an appropriate way of honouring his wife.¹²² While this may appear understandable emotion, the use of the verb *φέρω* to indicate 'suffer' rather than the more normal 'endure' indicates his overturning of usual convention. Moreover, his hostility towards his parents (emphasized by the

¹²⁰ For the blurring of living and dead in the play, cf. e.g. Gregory (1979) 263; Buxton (1987) 19–23.

¹²¹ Cf. Dyson (1988) 21, who sees Admetus as 'a paradigmatic instance of grief as its most extreme'.

¹²² Padilla (2000) 191–2 suggests that Admetus' excessive promises are doomed attempts to compensate Alcestis for the *charis* she has shown him by dying, yet in making these hyperbolic promises Admetus further lowers his stock.

repetition of verbs of hatred: *στυγῶν, ἐχθαίρων*) alerts us that his reaction is not normal.¹²³ Alcestis herself mentioned the refusal of Admetus' parents to die for him, but does so in a way designed to highlight her own courage (and hence increase Admetus' gratitude to her) rather than to encourage Admetus to feel hostility. Indeed, Alcestis' description of Admetus' parents ends with the resigned statement 'some god has made things turn out in this way' (*ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν / θεῶν τις ἐξέπραξεν ὥσθ' οὕτως ἔχειν*, 297–8), attributing responsibility for her death to Admetus' cruel fate rather than to his parents' choice.¹²⁴ Admetus goes beyond Alcestis' reasonable request, promising not only to remain unmarried but to loathe his parents, a sentiment which would be disturbing to a traditionally minded audience.¹²⁵

He then goes on to describe how he will mourn Alcestis, once more going beyond normal social bounds. Not only does he reject all forms of music and feasting for an indefinite period (343–7), but he intends to commission a statue of Alcestis to share his bed—a response so bizarre that it borders on the comic:¹²⁶

σοφῇ δὲ χειρὶ τεκτόνων δέμας τὸ σὸν
εἵκασθ' ἐν λέκτροισιν ἐκταθήσεται,
ᾧ προσπεσοῦμαι καὶ περιπτύσσων χέρας
ὄνομα καλῶν σὸν τὴν φίλην ἐν ἀγκάλαις
δόξω γυναῖκα καίπερ οὐκ ἔχων ἔχειν
ψυχρὰν μὲν, οἶμαι, τέρψιν, ἀλλ' ὅμως βάρος
ψυχῆς ἀπαντλοίην ἄν. (348–54)

An image of your body, made by the skilled hands of craftsmen, shall be laid in my bed, and I shall fall upon it and wrap my arms around it, calling your

¹²³ See Parker (2007) on 338 for the emotional impact of these verbs.

¹²⁴ Cf. Golden (1970) 118.

¹²⁵ The importance of respecting parents is embedded in Greek culture and expressed in various forms of literature: for particularly explicit statements cf. e.g. Dem. 24.60, 102; Lys. 13.19, 19.55, 31.20–3; see also Dover (1974) 273–4; Blundell (1989) 41–2. For the shocking nature of Admetus' statement, cf. Segal (1992) 143.

¹²⁶ Burnett (1965) 245 sees Admetus' response as a laudable attempt to repay the magnitude of Alcestis' sacrifice, and regards the statue as a positive way to attempt to keep his marriage alive. Similarly Golden (1970) sees the statue as an act of humble worship which contrasts with Admetus' earlier egotism. However, Admetus' response is excessive in all its particulars, and is so out of line with traditional ideas about mourning that it is hard to see it in a positive light: cf. Parker (2007) on 348–54.

name, and I will imagine that I have my dear wife in my arms, though I do not have her. It will be a cold pleasure, I think, but nevertheless I will lighten the weight of my soul.

The statue acts as a visual representation of Admetus' loss, as well as possibly evoking the *korai* of archaic Athenian grave monuments.¹²⁷ Thus the statue is intended to be a perpetual reminder of Admetus' bereavement, yet its presence in his bed symbolizes not only his fidelity to Alcestis but also his inability to accept her death, for the statue is used as a substitute for a living wife rather than as a memorial to a dead one. As well as suggesting a troubling fusion of the worlds of life and death, the *korē* evokes aristocratic expenditure on mourning, and is thus a suitable symbol to suggest the excessive nature of Admetus' grief.

After Alcestis has died, the Chorus offer a typical piece of threnodic *consolatio*, reminding Admetus that he is not alone in his suffering and hence urging him to endure it:

Ἀδμητ', ἀνάγκη τάσδε συμφορὰς φέρειν
οὐ γάρ τι πρῶτος οὐδὲ λοίσθιος βροτῶν
γυναικὸς ἐσθλῆς ἤμπλακες· γίγνωσκε δὲ
ὥς πᾶσιν ἡμῖν κατθανεῖν ὀφείλεται. (416–19)

Admetus, it is necessary for you to bear this disaster. For you are neither the first nor the last of mortals who has lost a good wife. Recognize that death is a debt which all of us owe.

The Chorus's words are standard, but their call for perspective is an implicit rebuke of Admetus' earlier excesses.¹²⁸ In response, Admetus makes it clear that he will not moderate his stance and instead expands his excessive mourning to implicate the rest of the city: every Thessalian is to join in the mourning ritual, even the horses are to have their manes cut, and music is banned for an entire year (425–31). The involvement of every Thessalian is reminiscent of the hiring of professional mourners to expand the funeral, and runs counter to the contemporary Athenian rule that only close kin

¹²⁷ Cf. Slater (2000); Padilla (2000) 194.

¹²⁸ Rosenmeyer (1963) 217–23 recognizes the conventionality of the Chorus's stance, though suggests that it is meant to be comically banal.

should attend the procession. The cutting of horses' manes mirrors the cutting of hair in human mourning, but creates a humorously overblown effect.¹²⁹ The ban on music again appears a way of extending the funeral far beyond its appropriate time-limit, rather than observing the normal pattern of mourning followed by burial. The ban on music may also suggest a rejection of the traditional consolatory role of funerary poetry, and hence reminds us of how Admetus' insistence on perpetual mourning runs counter to traditional wisdom.

Admetus' extreme mourning is doubly inappropriate in that it is a response to a death which he has himself caused, and this irony is brought out throughout the play. In Admetus' laments, Euripides makes use of the *topos* of (female) ritual mourning whereby the mourner bewails the adverse effects that the death will have on them. Here, however, as Alcestis has made clear, Admetus should interpret her death as a noble sacrifice rather than a terrible loss, and his complaints about his own fate come across not as pitiful but as self-indulgent and insensitive.¹³⁰ This theme is particularly emphasized by Admetus' monody after his acceptance of Heracles into the house, where he goes so far as to wish to die:

πῶς ἂν ὀλοίμην;
 ἦ βαρυνδαίμονα μήτηρ μ' ἔτεκεν.
 ζηλῶ φθιμένους, κείνων ἔραμαι,
 κεῖν' ἐπιθυμῶ δώματα ναίειν.
 οὔτε γὰρ αὐγὰς χαίρω προσορῶν
 οὔτ' ἐπὶ γαίης πόδα πεζεύων·
 τοῖον ὄμηρόν μ' ἀποσυλήσας
 Ἄϊδη Θάνατος παρέδωκεν. (864–71)

¹²⁹ Parker (2007) on 428–9 cites Hdt. 9.24, Plut. *Pelop.* 33 and *Alex.* 72 as examples of horses' hair being cut as a form of mourning, but all of these are in the context of military campaigns and are a way of honouring a dead general. Since horses are part of the army and are present when other mourners might not be, it makes more sense for them to be included in such battlefield rituals, whereas asking horses to mourn for Alcestis is arbitrary and exaggerated. Parker tentatively suggests the use of horses might be a northern Greek custom, introduced by Euripides to add 'local colour'; even if this is the case, the custom would still be unfamiliar and bizarre to an Athenian audience.

¹³⁰ Cf. Golden (1970) 120.

I wish I could die! My mother bore me to a heavy fate. I envy the dead, I long to be among them, I desire to live in their dwellings. For I take no pleasure in looking upon the sunlight nor in walking over the earth, such is the hostage which Death has seized from me and handed over to Hades.

Again, Admetus' response takes on overtones of hypocrisy, given that he accepted Alcestis' sacrifice in order to avoid his own death. His use of verbs of passion and sexual longing (ἐραμαι, ἐπιθυμῶ) not only suggest the intensity of his grief but also suggest his longing for Alcestis herself, whose loss is recalled at the end of the stanza. Yet once more, Admetus' grief is corrupted by our knowledge of the circumstances, for Alcestis has not been 'seized from' him, but given up willingly to assure his own salvation. Here too we see his cries of anguish set against the Chorus's restrained attitude, as they acknowledge his suffering (873, 876–7) but also offer traditional consolation. They remind him that grieving will do Alcestis no good (τὰν νέρθε δ' οὐδὲν ὠφελείς, 875), and once more encourage him to endure, reminding him that he is not the first to have lost a wife (892, 926–32).

Indeed this time the Chorus offer a paradigm for appropriate mourning, telling the story of a relative who suffered a greater loss than Admetus but bore it with more dignity:

ἐμοί τις ἦν
 ἐν γένει, ὧι κόρος ἀξιόθρη-
 νος ὤλετ' ἐν δόμοισιν
 μονόπαις· ἀλλ' ἔμπας
 ἔφερε κακὸν αἷλις, ἄτεκνος ὢν,
 πολιὰς ἐπὶ χαίτας
 ἤδη προπετῆς ὢν
 βióτου τε πόρσω (903–10)

In my family there was a man whose son died in his house, worthy of a dirge, an only child. Yet he bore his suffering with moderation, even though he was childless and was rushing forward to grey hairs and an advanced age.

The Chorus's words are an implicit criticism of Admetus. In contrast to Admetus' laments for his cruel fate, the Chorus remind him of the benefits he enjoys: he has healthy children and so can expect to be

cared for in his old age.¹³¹ Whereas a tragic chorus (and probably a threnodic one too) would more usually draw on a mythological *exemplum*, the Chorus instead give an example drawn from their own ordinary experience. By using an example which is not poetic or high-flown, the Chorus suggest the absurdity of Admetus' overblown language. Instead, Admetus is encouraged to learn not from the great heroes of the mythological past, but from the experience of an ordinary old man. The down-to-earth mentality of the Chorus highlights Admetus' own self-indulgence, as well as reminding the audience that the appropriate response to suffering is one already found throughout society.

As in Sophocles' *Electra*, the theme of appropriate mourning is developed by the contrast between the excesses of the tragic figure and the conventional attitudes expounded by the Chorus. In the case of *Alcestis*, however, Admetus' attitude is not one of implacable yet admirable defiance of social norms, but rather one of self-indulgent pity, made comic by the grotesque lengths to which he intends to go and by the hypocrisy inherent in his wishes to die, having previously accepted his wife's death as a means of avoiding his own. The magical circumstances of Alcestis' death make possible this tension, yet in setting it up the play encourages the audience to consider what constitutes appropriate responses to grief.

Grief and endurance

As we have already seen, the Chorus attempt to console Admetus by drawing on the traditional *topos* of the need to endure death (usually described with the verbs *φέρω* or *τολμάω*).¹³² This idea recurs throughout *Alcestis*, but is reworked to achieve a range of effects. Admetus himself appropriates the language of endurance as he

¹³¹ As Parker (2007) on 903–6 notes, the Chorus's claim to have a common relative strains the usual convention of the collective choral voice. Yet the purpose of doing so is (I would suggest) to draw attention to the gnomic nature of their comment: we are not meant to believe that the Chorus literally all share a relative, but rather to see their statement as reflecting traditional views about loss and lamentation which any man could share in.

¹³² Cf. Lloyd (1985) 123–4.

speaks to the dying Alcestis. Rather than recognizing his own responsibility to endure his grief, Admetus instead asks Alcestis to 'get up and endure' (ἀλλ' ἄνα, τόλμα, 276), claiming that he will 'no longer be alive' if she dies (σοῦ γὰρ φθιμένης οὐκέτ' ἂν εἶην, 277). Admetus' transference of the 'endurance' motif from the bereaved to the dying person is used to highlight his self-indulgent attitude, while the extreme displays of emotion he exhibits are doubly inappropriate since the purpose of Alcestis' death is to keep Admetus alive. Similarly Pheres' first words on entry are a traditional funerary consolation, praising Alcestis and advising Admetus to endure her loss:

ἐσθλῆς γάρ, οὐδεὶς ἀντερεῖ, καὶ σώφρονος
 γυναικὸς ἡμάρτηκας. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν
 φέρειν ἀνάγκη καίπερ ὄντα δύσφορα. (615–17)

No one would deny that you have lost a good and chaste wife. But it is necessary to bear these things, even though they are hard to bear.

Pheres' advice is verbally similar to the Chorus's earlier moralizing (416–19), yet here too the circumstances in which the statement is given make it ironic rather than banal. The phrasing implies that death must be borne because it is outside human control, yet Admetus' own choice in events is made clear by the *agōn* scene which follows, where Pheres criticizes Admetus for his selfishness in assuming he can expect others to die for him (694–705). Equally, Pheres' words of consolation appear hollow when, as Admetus' angry speech to him shows, he too is implicated in Alcestis' death by his own choice to live (634–5, 644–7, 717). Similarly, the conventional threnodic praise of the deceased which Pheres offers focuses on Alcestis' courage in dying to save Admetus, and this too is tainted by his later revelation that he thinks it foolish to die on another's behalf (σοῦ δ' ἂν προθνήσκων μάλλον ἐξημάρτανον, 710).

The importance of endurance is also explained by the drunken Heracles, as he encourages the Servant to behave cheerfully and join him in revelry:

τὰ θνητὰ πράγματ' ᾗοιδας† ἦν ἔχει φύσιν;
 οἶμαι μὲν οὐ πόθεν γάρ; ἀλλ' ἄκουέ μου.
 βροτοῖς ᾗπασι κατθανεῖν ὀφείλεται,
 κοῦκ ἔστι θνητῶν ὅστις ἐξεπίσταται

τὴν αὔριον μέλλουσιν εἰ βιώσεται
 τὸ τῆς τύχης γὰρ ἀφανὲς οἱ προβήσεται,
 καὶ σὺ οὐ διδάκτων οὐδ' ἀλίσκεται τέχνη. (780–6)

Do you know what the nature of mortal affairs is? I don't think so—for how could you? Listen to me then. Death is a debt which all of us owe, and there is no mortal who knows whether he will be living the following day. The outcome of our fate is invisible, and it cannot be taught or captured by skill.

Heracles' confidence that the Servant will not know the important wisdom he is about to impart (οἶμαι μὲν οὐ· πόθεν γάρ; 781) is humorous given how unoriginal his advice turns out to be, and the humour derives from the audience realizing that Heracles is actually delivering standard tropes. Heracles' drunken philosophizing captures the use of such *gnōmai* in sympotic contexts where they are used, as here, to encourage the listener to take pleasure in the moment. However, his words are equally applicable to the situation within the house, where they reflect the morals of the *thrēnos*. Indeed, this double meaning is emphasized by the phrase βροτοῖς ἅπανσι κατθανεῖν ὀφείλεται, verbally almost identical to the Chorus's earlier advice to Admetus (ὥς πᾶσιν ἡμῖν κατθανεῖν ὀφείλεται, 419). The sympotic *gnōmē* is thus in fact equally applicable to a funerary context, and this duality of genre is further suggested by the Servant's description of the two types of song within the house, as Heracles' sympotic singing clashes with the servants' laments (760–3). The fact that *thrēnoi* share their *gnōmai* with other forms of poetry thus allows a double layer of irony to operate in the scene.¹³³ Within the context of the play, Heracles' comments are presented as insensitive and shameful, given the recent death in the house. Yet the Chorus have already implied that the underlying morals are appropriate ones to offer to someone recently bereaved.

Finally, the motif of endurance is transformed by the Chorus in their ode to Necessity (962–1005). Here the Chorus elevate the *topos* from a banal *gnōmē* into the foundation of a wider philosophical and

¹³³ Garner (1988) 68–70 argues that Heracles' *gnōmai* also suggest epinician moralizing: a further irony achieved by the transferability of these morals between genres. For *epinikion* in the play, see p. 32 above and Swift (forthcoming a).

theological system.¹³⁴ The ode begins by establishing the Chorus's poetic credentials; this then gives them authority to make moralizing pronouncements (ἐγὼ καὶ διὰ μούσας / καὶ μετάρσιος ἦξα, 962–3). The Chorus then go on to explain the basis of their philosophy:

κρεῖσσον οὐδὲν Ἀνάγκας
 ἡὔρον οὐδέ τι φάρμακον
 Θρήσσαις ἐν σανίσιν, τὰς
 Ὀρφεία κατέγραψεν
 γήρως, οὐδ' ὅσα Φοῖβος Ἀ-
 σκληπιάδαις ἔδωκε
 φάρμακα πολυπόνοις
 ἀντιτεμὼν βροτοῖσιν. (965–72)

I have found nothing more powerful than Necessity, no cure for it in the Thracian tablets which Orpheus' voice wrote down, nor in all the medicines which Phoebus gathered for suffering mortals and gave to the sons of Asclepius.

They then go on to expand upon the nature of Necessity: she cannot be moved by mortal sacrifice, feels no pity, and cannot be overcome by any force (973–83). Moreover she acts as the enforcer of Zeus' will (978–9), traditionally regarded as the ultimate force behind all human fate. Having set up this system, the Chorus go on to give the link to the play; they explain that Admetus is a prisoner of Necessity (καὶ σ' ἐν ἀφύκτοισι χερῶν εἶλε θεὰ δεσμοῖς, 984) and advise him to endure (τόλμα δ', 986).¹³⁵ The ode then ends with traditional funerary language: they remind Admetus that lament cannot restore the dead (986–8), offer the death of semi-divine heroes as a paradigm (989–90), and praise Alcestis (991–4). The final stanza goes on to imagine Alcestis' epitaph:

μηδὲ νεκρῶν ὡς φθιμένων χῶμα νομιζέσθω
 τύμβος σᾶς ἀλόχων, θεοῖσι δ' ὁμοίως
 τιμάσθω, σέβας ἐμπόρων.

¹³⁴ On the assimilation of Necessity to death, see Dale (1978) on 965; Parker (2007) on 969–72.

¹³⁵ See Gregory (1979) 269–70, who further suggests that the rule of Necessity implies Admetus' own future death. This seems to me to read rather too much into the play's ending, but Gregory is right to note the paradox achieved by Alcestis' salvation.

καί τις δοχμίαν κέλευ-
 θον ἐμβαίνων τόδ' ἐρεῖ·
 Αὔτα ποτὲ προύθαν' ἀνδρός,
 νῦν δ' ἔστι μάκαιρα δαίμων·
 χαῖρ', ὦ πότνι, εὖ δὲ δοίης.
 τοιαῖ νιν προσερούσι φῆμαι. (995–1005)

Let the grave of your wife not be considered the funeral mound of the dead, but let her be honoured like the gods, an object of reverence for travellers. Someone passing by the winding path will speak as follows: 'This woman died on behalf of her husband, and now she is a blessed divinity. Greetings, lady, and grant me good things.' These are the words that will be spoken.

The Chorus draw on the conventions of the funerary epigram: the role of the passer-by in commemorating the dead; the importance of the physical location; the praise of the deceased. They also imagine Alcestis receiving the honours of hero cult, with enduring power after death located around her tomb. The prospect of hero cult for the virtuous dead is a theme familiar from Pindaric *thrēnoi*, though alien to the tragic tradition, where cult is portrayed as a compensation for the heroes' extreme nature or extreme suffering rather than a reward for good moral character.¹³⁶ Imagining Alcestis as a recipient of cult therefore locates the Chorus in the threnodic tradition rather than in the Homeric (and more gloomy) account of the dead. The Chorus thus describe their position in a way which evokes poetic attitudes towards death and mourning derived from threnodic poetry and from funerary inscriptions, while their opening statement reminds the audience that they are working within a poetic tradition. While *thrēnoi* were not performed in fifth-century Athens, the restrained attitude to death they present remained the approved way of responding to death, and thus the Chorus's view represents a normative ideal. Their description of Necessity, however, elevates the traditional moral about enduring death into a wider theological scheme, linked to fate and the will of Zeus.

The 'endurance' motif is deployed throughout the play, encouraging the audience to question and reassess traditional ideas about mourning, and it is in this light that we can interpret the play's

¹³⁶ Cf. Seaford (1994) 123–39.

ending. Scholars have sometimes found the play's outcome troubling, for Admetus' reunion with Alcestis is predicated on his accepting a new woman into his house, despite his promise to Alcestis not to remarry.¹³⁷ However, when we examine the stichomythia between Admetus and Heracles we find repeated use of the 'endurance' motif, in a way which not only makes sense of the scene but also ties it into the play's broader ethical drive.

We should first note that Heracles gives the woman to Admetus not to replace Alcestis but to be a servant within Admetus' house (*δίδωμι τήνδε σοῖσι προσπολεῖν δόμοις*, 1024). While it is true that Heracles himself later suggests the possibility of remarriage (1087), this is couched in terms of general advice and does not imply that he intends this woman to be the new wife. Similarly, while Admetus' gesture of taking the woman by the hand and leading her into the house (1115–18) reflects wedding ritual, this gesture is significant mainly because the audience knows that the strange woman is really Alcestis, and so is inclined to interpret the action accordingly. Indeed Heracles accepts Admetus' motivations for refusing to remarry (*αἰνῶ μὲν αἰνῶ*, 1093) but does not regard Admetus' hostility to a future marriage as reason not to take the woman:

Ἀδ. θάνοιμ' ἐκείνην καίπερ οὐκ οὔσαν προδούς.
 Ἡρ. δέχου νυν εἴσω τήνδε γενναίως δόμων. (1096–7)

ADMETUS. May I die if I betray her, even though she is no longer alive.

HERACLES. Take this woman generously into your house then.

The particle *νυν* in Heracles' line indicates that he does not regard what he is saying to be in conflict with Admetus' statement.¹³⁸ Rather, the implication is that the discussion about remarriage is a digression on how Admetus could soothe his grief, while accepting

¹³⁷ Cf. e.g. Smith (1960) 144–5; von Fritz (1962); Conacher (1988) 41–2; Schein (1988) (who sees the scene as indicating the priority of male *philia* over marriage ties); Segal (1992) 147; Padilla (2000) 205.

¹³⁸ Parker (2007) on 1097 finds the logical connection implied by *νυν* sufficiently jarring to be confident that two lines have been lost between 1096 and 1097. It seems to me, however, that Heracles is jollying Admetus along, and trying to suggest to him that there is no logical discrepancy between his loyalty to Alcestis and his hosting of the new woman. In fact, of course, Heracles is aware that by accepting the new woman Admetus will get Alcestis back, so for him the *νυν* is not a non sequitur.

the unknown woman is a separate issue. Indeed, the text is quite explicit that Heracles does not portray the woman as a substitute for Alcestis: she is a slave-woman captured in an athletic contest (1028–32) and so not a suitable wife for a king, while Heracles makes it clear that he intends to come and collect her, asking Admetus to keep her as a servant only if he dies (1020–4).

Admetus responds to Heracles' request by setting up an artificial dichotomy: either the woman must stay in the men's quarters, where Admetus will be unable to guarantee her virginity, or she must stay in Alcestis' bed, in which case Admetus would be accused of dishonouring Alcestis' memory. Yet the presence of the Maidservant at the opening of the play has made it clear that there are already female servants within Admetus' house and highlights the absurdity of Admetus' over-emotional response.¹³⁹ Moreover, Alcestis' request was specifically that Admetus should not take a new wife, and was made in order to protect the interests of her children. Alcestis did not even suggest that she expected Admetus to remain sexually chaste: her fear was the authority that a new wife could wield in the home, and the hostility that a stepmother might feel towards her husband's existing children (see 302–19).¹⁴⁰ Concerns about the relationship between stepmothers and stepchildren were common in Greek culture (as in many others), and Alcestis' fears would presumably have seemed reasonable to a Greek audience.¹⁴¹

Just as Admetus in his initial response to Alcestis (328–68) goes beyond her actual request by describing the excessive mourning he intends to implement, so too we see his excessive tendencies here, as

¹³⁹ Cf. Parker (2007) on 1055–6. For the division of Greek houses into male and female spaces, see Jameson (1990a), 172, 187.

¹⁴⁰ Dyson (1988) notes the gulf between Alcestis' request and Admetus' promise, as well as observing that Admetus' reluctance to take in the stranger springs from his self-imposed vow of chastity rather than his promise not to take a new wife. Dale (1978) xxvi–xxvii suggests that Alcestis' tears at the thought of a successor in Admetus' bed implies sexual jealousy, yet it seems excessively psychological to impute this as a secret motive for her request that he not remarry.

¹⁴¹ Cf. e.g. Eur. *Ion* 611, 1329, where hostility between stepmother and stepson is taken for granted; Eur. *Hipp.* 305–10, where one of the arguments the Nurse uses to persuade Phaedra to live is that she needs to protect her legitimate children's interests against her stepson. For a discussion of the theme of the wicked stepmother, see Watson (1995).

he reinterprets Alcestis' request that he should not remarry to mean that he should not allow a new woman into the house in any capacity. Admetus' response, then, is not a genuine expression of loyalty to his dead wife's wishes, but rather a further manifestation of the extreme and self-indulgent attitude to grief we have already seen.¹⁴² During the discussion between Admetus and Heracles, we find further use of the endurance motif. So, for example, Admetus recalls the impossibility of bringing the dead back to life (1076) and Heracles responds by telling Admetus to bear his sorrows appropriately (*μή νυν ὑπέρβαλλ' ἀλλ' ἐναισίμως φέρε*, 1077) and by reminding him of the futility of perpetual mourning (*τί δ' ἄν προκόπτοιοις, εἰ θέλεις ἀεὶ στένειν*; 1079). Similarly, Heracles suggests that Admetus' sorrow will fade in time (1085), while Admetus insists that his mourning will continue for the rest of his life (*χρόνον λέγοις ἄν, εἰ χρόνος τὸ κατθανεῖν*, 1086). At the end of the argument, as Admetus is finally persuaded to take the woman into his house, Heracles urges him to accept her, using the verb *τολμάω* to describe Admetus' state of mind in accepting her (*τόλμα προτεῖναι χεῖρα καὶ θιγεῖν ξένης*, 1117).

The ending of *Alcestis*, then, should not be seen as subversive but rather as a playful exploration of the theme of endurance and mourning dramatized earlier in the play. Admetus rejects the strange woman on the grounds that accepting her into his house would be to dishonour Alcestis' memory, and the audience is likely to link this to his promise to Alcestis on her deathbed. Yet, in fact, Admetus' attitude to the stranger goes far beyond Alcestis' actual request, just as did his initial response to her demand. Heracles' persuasion of Admetus to accept the woman represents an attempt to make Admetus moderate his grief, and to bring him into line with a conventional and more restrained attitude to mourning. Thus the play explores ways of coping with grief, and exploits the inherent tension between the ritual lament and the social value placed on restraint and endurance.

¹⁴² Cf. Bradley (1980), who sees Admetus' horror of the veiled woman as symbolizing his failure to accept the inevitability of death, and his touching of her as a way of apprehending death.

Conclusion

In the three plays studied in this chapter, we can see an awareness of the tensions and discrepancies between contemporary mourning practice and poetic tradition. Because of contemporary awareness of funerary legislation, these differences can also take on a more political meaning, as the extreme lamentation of tragic heroes evokes not only Homeric models but also the aristocratic and socially disruptive grief of the pre-Solonian funeral. Restrictions on mourning were important to the coherence of the *polis*, and Solon's regulations suggest that the Greeks were well aware of the negative consequences that uncontrolled and lavish mourning could have. Moreover, the restrictions tie in with the ideology of fifth-century democracy, and the importance of remaining *metrios*.

Tragic figures nevertheless operate within their own world of deliberate archaism, where a different set of standards are felt to apply. For this reason, tragic mourning can often be presented as a normal response, given the heroes' tendency towards excess and the huge scale of their suffering. On the other hand, we also find tragedy presenting mourning in a way which deliberately problematizes it, by contrasting it negatively with normative ideas about lamentation or by demonstrating the negative consequences which can emerge from excessive grief. Thus in *Persians*, the unrestrained Persian grief is shown as a way of characterizing them more generally, and the lamentation we see on-stage symbolizes the broader differences between Greeks and barbarians. Suffering is a shared human experience, and in observing the Persians' grief the audience is encouraged to recognize the similarities between them, and to remember their own mortality. Nevertheless, we are also shown that the Persian response to their suffering conflicts with Greek norms, and thus reminds us of the flaws in the Persian moral system which have led to Xerxes' downfall. *Persians* is also striking for its Chorus's involvement in the wilder forms of lamentation, which encourages us to perceive it as a trait common to all barbarians, rather than simply a feature of Xerxes as a tragic figure.

Conversely, the other two plays we have examined bring out conventions of mourning through their Chorus, who express traditional moralizing views about grief and mourning. The use of the

chorus in this context is apt, partly because the tragic chorus is frequently used to espouse traditional morals, and partly because their consolation evokes the threnodic chorus, whose role is to philosophize in response to death. In *Electra*, the appropriate way to respond to death is explicitly debated in the *parodos*, and is thus foregrounded as a major theme in the play. Both Electra and Clytemnestra are characterized through their misuse of funerary ritual, and Electra's overuse of mourning ritual stands in contrast to Clytemnestra's disregard for it. In both cases the character's attitude to ritual is used to indicate a broader truth. Electra's insistence on prolonging her grief shows her refusal to accept the consolatory function of mourning and its role in social reintegration. Despite our sympathy for her position, her disregard for ritual norms alerts us to the socially disruptive nature of her grief. Conversely, the shared theme of ritual perversion between Electra and Clytemnestra draws our attention to the ethical similarities in the two women's position, and hence alludes to the moral difficulties surrounding the act of matricide. In *Alcestis* too, Admetus' disregard for the morals urged upon him by the Chorus is used to indicate the dubious morality of his position. Admetus, like Electra, insists on an overblown and excessively prolonged form of mourning ritual, and it is only as he learns to moderate his grief that the play can come to its positive conclusion.

In these cases, tragic lament plays on the distinction between the personal and the public lament which, as we have seen, is important for understanding real-life funerary practice. In real life, the personalized ritual lament is something strictly regulated, because of its socially disruptive element, and is part of a broader process of grieving which leads to reintegration and to the giving up of grief. Thus the *goos* remains socially sanctioned precisely because it is part of a broader ritual movement, counterbalanced by public forms of mourning which focused more on commemoration and celebration than on personal grief. Tragic lament, on the other hand, often sets personal and public responses to death in contrast, presenting the excessive emotionalism of the heroes as in conflict with the socially approved wisdom offered by the Chorus. By separating these forms of lament, the plays are thus able to explore the negative aspects of funeral ritual, and to play out concerns about how society incorporates grief and death.

Conclusion

We have now explored a range of ways in which tragedy engages with lyric poetry; our investigation has covered five lyric genres, and has encompassed the works of all three surviving tragedians. It is clear that the interaction between tragedy and lyric is extensive and varied; it can also be remarkably sophisticated, and can enrich our understanding of the plays in which it is found. Much of this book has been devoted to close analysis, and has sought to demonstrate how generic interaction can be used as an interpretative tool. However, the importance of generic interaction goes beyond the illumination of poetic effects in particular plays. Rather, acknowledging the full scale of tragedy's engagement with lyric material raises further questions about why the tragedians make use of this technique, and what it tells us about tragedy and its relationship to other lyric forms. The implications of generic interaction thus affect our understanding of tragedy, and more generally of the musico-poetic culture of fifth-century Athens. In this concluding section, I will aim not only to summarize what has emerged from analysing particular plays and lyric genres, but also to address these broader issues.

TECHNIQUES OF GENERIC INTERACTION

As we have seen, the methods by which tragedy evokes lyric material vary; they range from contextual relevance to performative similarities or to more specific verbal and imagistic triggers. Generic interaction tends to be at its densest in choral passages, which suggests

that the technique hinges on the ability of one type of chorus to resemble another. Nevertheless, we regularly find references in spoken passages; this tends to occur most noticeably in plays which contain a high level of generic interaction and where the allusions are thematically important. The fact that these references are scattered throughout the play rather than limited to choral odes implies a broader significance to the allusions. Hence the audience is encouraged not simply to admire the sophistication of an ode which draws on other choral models, but to consider the relevance of those models more generally, and to make a connection between the function of the lyric genre and what they see on-stage. It is not surprising, therefore, that plays which contain widespread generic interaction tend to be those where the themes of the genre are relevant to interpreting the play.

To evoke a particular genre, tragedy mostly relies on subtle echoes: any individual trigger taken alone is rarely enough for us to state with confidence that a generic interaction is present. This should not be surprising: lyric genres tend not to have individual features which are sufficient to identify them, with a few exceptions such as the ritual tags of *paian* and *hymenaios*. Most of the time, however, we can identify allusions to a lyric genre by building up a cluster of relevant clues. For example, it would be absurd to claim that light imagery was in and of itself enough to evoke the *paian*; light imagery is found in many genres and can be used to signify a range of ideas. Nevertheless, when we come across light imagery in a passage which comes in the wider context of a desire for healing, and when the imagery is placed in conjunction with a prayer to Apollo, the case for a paeanic allusion becomes considerably stronger. From the original audience's perspective, the effect was a holistic one: it is the clustering of features that gives the passage a distinctly paeanic flavour. Similarly, if the audience heard a reference to light after they had already listened to a choral ode with paeanic content, they would be more likely to interpret the imagery through the filter of the *paian*. When considering whether these references are present or not, we do well to remember that the original audience would have been sensitively attuned to the subtle clues that characterized poetic genres. For us, identifying lyric allusions is a complicated guessing game based on patchy evidence drawn together from a range of sources; for a

fifth-century Athenian, it would have been a far more intuitive process. Moreover, the audience might have gained clues in ways now lost to us: in particular, the dance-movements of the chorus or the music of their songs could have been used to powerful effect.

One obvious place to look for lyric echoes is in the metre of tragic odes; in fact, however, there seems to be surprisingly little resonance. There are occasional examples of the tragedians using metre in a way which reinforces other generic markers: for example, there are a few instances of epinician language coupled with dactylo-epitrite metre (e.g. Eur. *Andr.* 766–801, *El.* 860–5, *Med.* 410–45), or of paeonic language using a metre associated with religious song (e.g. *Ion* 125–7). More generally though, the correlation between genre-allusion and metrical resonance is not strong. This is connected to another feature of tragedy's use of lyric material: it is nearly always partial. Lyric genres might be evoked in tragedy, but they are not replicated: the tragedians trigger their audience's awareness of a particular genre with a range of clues, but avoid imitation. Even the richest and most systematic uses of a lyric genre still encase it within a tragic ode, and we do not find a piece of poetry that could genuinely be mistaken for an example of the genre. The relative dearth of metrical resonance can perhaps be explained in this light. The variety and complexity of tragic metres is a particular feature of the genre, and perhaps it was felt to be a facet of tragedy's identity worth preserving.

By avoiding faithful replication of lyric poems, tragedy creates a sense of distance from the genres it incorporates, and maintains its own non-lyric identity. However, this avoidance also ties in with another characteristic of lyric allusion: its accessibility. Knowledge of specific lyric pieces was gained through elite means, whether circulation in books, reperformance at the symposium, or rote-learning as part of education. Yet the conventions of several of the genres discussed were known in Athens through less elite routes. We can be relatively confident that some genres were performed regularly by Athenians (for example, *paian* or *hymenaios*). The versions performed in contemporary society might have been less crafted than the surviving literary *paianes* or *hymenaios*, but since these songs performed the same functions as their literary equivalents, it is reasonable to infer continuities in language and style. In

other cases, even if the genre itself was not performed in fifth-century Athens, some of its conventions might have been familiar from more everyday sources. So, for example, while *thrēnoi* were no longer performed, we see continuities in the conventions of funerary song that apply also to epigrams or to private lament. Similarly, while *partheneia* were not an Athenian custom, when tragedy evokes *partheneia* it tends to allude to the ways in which Athenian society does present female development: for example, through poetic motifs such as flower-picking or 'marriage to death', or by alluding to contemporary rituals such as the *arkteia* or the *arrhēphoria*. Tragedy's evocation of lyric genres, then, aims at impressionistic clues, rather than direct allusion to famous pieces. Moreover, it enriches these clues by presenting them in conjunction with allusions to their ritual context (for example, with language which evokes the rituals of a wedding or a funeral). In doing so, it appeals to a broad section of the audience, for even though an ordinary Athenian might not have had a detailed knowledge of the works of Sappho or Simonides, he would probably have known the general conventions of wedding or funerary song, and he would certainly have been familiar with the contemporary rituals associated with these moments. While a more educated audience-member might have been in a position to gain more from the allusions, tragedy strives to make its engagement to lyric poetry something which all the audience can respond to on some level.

Tragedy's evocation of lyric also tends to smooth over variations within any given genre, and to present a uniform picture characterized by clear identifying features. This is a feature inherent in allusion (or parody). To create an image of a genre through brief allusions, the tragedians need to paint in broad brushstrokes; it would be ineffectual to try to highlight subtle differences between Pindaric and Bacchylidean *epinikion*, or between Spartan and Theban parthenaic song. Moreover, the purpose of setting up such an allusion is often to establish a generic template with which to contrast the tragic action: presenting a nuanced picture would defeat the purpose. However, this strategy is telling if we assume that many audience-members derived their knowledge of the lyric genre from an impressionistic sense of what the genre was like, rather than on a detailed knowledge and sophisticated analysis of the entire *corpus*.

When tragedy incorporates lyric material, then, it makes an effort to do so in a way which is accessible, and which links the lyric genres to their contemporary ritual context. We can infer from this that a wide section of the audience was in a position to respond to such references. Since tragedy itself was a mass-orientated genre, it is not surprising that it should aim at widespread appeal; what is perhaps more striking is that this is a viable strategy when dealing with non-tragic lyric. The tragedians make considerable effort to present this material to their mass audience, and to do so in an inclusive way, and this should alert us to the importance that choral performance held in Athens (and beyond), and hence what could be gained by making use of these allusions.

FUNCTIONS OF GENERIC INTERACTION

The way in which lyric material is used varies between plays, but it is nevertheless possible to pick out some general trends. Firstly, generic interaction is frequently used to signal some kind of connection between the genre and the surrounding action. In the most sophisticated examples, this connection may underpin the play's dominant themes, yet even where the lyric allusions are less substantive, they are normally doing poetic work. So, for example, there are several references to the *paian* scattered across Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* which express the real-life conventions of *euphēmia* related to the genre (see the Appendix for details). When these references occur, the use of the genre enhances a particular tone or idea: for example, the poignant contrast between the Chorus's pious innocence and Cassandra's knowledge of her future (1247–8). In none of these cases would it be reasonable to suggest that the paeanic references changed our interpretation of the play as a whole, yet they are more than just decorative: they play on the audience's expectations of the genre evoked in order to manipulate their understanding of what they see on-stage.

In more sustained examples of generic interaction, the ideas evoked by the genre are of more central importance to the themes of the play: thus we find the *hymenaios* evoked in plays which deal

with sexuality and marriage, and *thrēnos* in plays which place particular emphasis on the ethics of grief and mourning. In these cases, the genre acts as a significant filter for understanding the meaning of the action: by recognizing how Electra's grief differs from conventional lament (Chapter 7 above), or how Hippolytus' attitude to sexuality differs from the norms of marriage-poetry (Chapter 6), we gain insight into what is problematic about these characters and what the relationship is between the world they inhabit and the world of the audience.

In many cases the function of evoking the genre is not monolithic. While the genre is relevant for a particular reason, once the audience has been invited to consider it, they may also notice ways in which it is not appropriate. Just as a simile can import meaning which adds additional information to what we have learned from the immediate comparison, so too alluding to a lyric genre may call to mind expectations which go beyond the obvious reason that it has been evoked. So, for example, the comparison of the Trojan War to an athletic contest in *Agamemnon* (62–6) relies on the comparison between different kinds of strenuous activities. This comparison is enhanced by the image of the *epinikion* being performed for Zeus: the god who has been named as originating the war (174–5). Both war and athletics are a test of physical vigour, and both result in praise. Yet comparing the peace-time activity of athletic contest to the hardships of the Greek army also highlights the inglorious aspects of war and so connects with the way in which the play calls into question the morality of the Greek victory at Troy (see Chapter 4).

Whether the allusion is simple or sustained, the connection drawn is usually ironic, and is used to create a sense of mismatch between the ideals of the genre and what the audience sees happening on-stage. This is often achieved through a mismatch between the genre's usual performance context and the context in which the song is actually performed. Thus, the *hymenaios* in Euripides' *Phaethon* (fr. 781 Kannicht, discussed in Chapter 6) is itself a straightforward reference to the genre, yet because the audience knows that Phaethon is dead it takes on ironic overtones. Similarly, in Euripides' *Electra*, the Chorus's joyous epinician-style praise (860–79) is troubling because we know that what is actually being praised is not an athletic success but a murder (Chapter 4). In cases where the genre is being

used 'correctly', the context is usually made problematic in some other way. Thus, tragic lament is usually in response to a death, but the normal ritual is nevertheless perverted: for example, the lament is given by the person who is about to die (e.g. Soph. *Ant.* 806–82), or the body is not available to be lamented over (e.g. Aesch. *Pers.* 909–1077). Even when the genre is used as part of a more optimistic portrayal, this sense of ironic mismatch still applies. So despite the sense of resolution at the end of *Iphigeneia among the Taurians*, the play still contrasts the dysfunctional world in which the play opens with the model set up by parthenaic song; the horrific rites at Tauris can only be brought to an end by the establishment of contemporary ritual (Chapter 5). In some cases, the ironic function which generic interaction fulfils infects the allusion itself, and the song or reference is in some way dysfunctional. So, the hymenaeal language in *Hippolytus* inverts the usual *topoi* of the genre to present marriage as problematic; similarly, the *parodos* of *Oedipus Tyrannus* subverts the paeanic associations of light with safety and healing by instead presenting it as dangerous and destructive (Chapter 3).

By creating this sense of mismatch, the play directs the audience's attention to the differences between the tragic action and the world of ritual normality evoked by the genre. In some cases, the genre acts as a positive *exemplum* to contrast with the horror of the play, and this highlights the dysfunctional nature of the tragic world. In Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women*, the repeated hymenaeal language highlights the shortcomings of the Danaids' attitude to marriage, which, by the end of the trilogy, will lead to bloodshed (Chapter 6). The norms embodied in the genre highlight where the tragic characters have gone wrong, and provide an explanation for the disaster we see unfolding. In other cases the mismatch raises questions about the genre itself, or about the different value-systems of different poetic types. For example in *Heracles*, the epinician language creates a mismatch between the Chorus's traditional understanding of *aretē* and the effects that this *aretē* will have in the play (Chapter 4). Rather than drawing on the genre as a normative model, the play in fact uses it to portray a naive understanding of the world, and the tragic action explores the limitations of an epinician value system. The sense of mismatch can therefore be a way of exploring the differences between heroic past and contemporary reality: a theme we find elsewhere in

tragedy. Alternatively the contrast between play and genre can cast the genre itself in a troubling light. So, the ambiguous presentation of the gods in *Oedipus Tyrannus* is highlighted through contrast with the optimistic view alluded to through the play's paeanic imagery. By juxtaposing these 'cruel' and 'kind' gods, the play presents the two world-views as coexistent, and so forces its audience to consider the difficulties in their own theological system.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM GENERIC INTERACTION?

As we have seen, generic interaction can illuminate our reading of particular plays or choral odes, and can in some cases cast light on passages previously felt to be obscure or problematic. The prevalence of lyric allusion in tragedy also raises broader issues about tragedy's role as a poetic genre, and its self-positioning within Athenian musical culture.

Overall, generic interaction relies on the idea that lyric genres embody a certain set of values: the values bound up in and expressed by the occasion to which the song responds. A sustained reference to lyric poetry is not, for the tragedians, simply an aesthetic or literary matter; rather it is a way of evoking a set of cultural assumptions which need not be made explicit. Thus the audience's connection to the play runs both ways. On the one hand, the genre provides a key for them to understand what they see on-stage; on the other, presenting the action of the play in terms of familiar rituals encourages them to make a connection between the play and the values of their own lives. In essence, generic interaction provides a mechanism for poetry to explore its own normative and societal status. Yet it is significant that it is tragedy which is the host-genre for this process of exploration. Lyric genres are fixed by their function and their performance contexts, and so while we find lyric poetry displaying generic self-awareness, the poetry has limited opportunity to question or subvert its own conventions. This is particularly apparent when it comes to tragedy's perversion and misappropriation of lyric

motifs. If a real *paian* contained a section which advocated not worshipping the gods, or a *thrēnos* contained a section criticizing the dead man for his poor moral character, the purpose and nature of the poem would be ruined. Poetry whose expression is part of its ritual function is not free to experiment with certain boundaries which define it. Tragedy's function, conversely, is looser and more flexible, and the context for which it is produced does not bind it to particular modes of expression. It can therefore incorporate other poetic types, without affecting its function. A tragic allusion to a *paian* is safely encased within the mimetic framework of the play: it is therefore not a 'real' *paian*, and its ritual function is no longer 'live'. Tragedy provides a space to explore the conventions and definitions of lyric poetry, and to exploit the roles that such poetry plays in society.

This process is assisted by the mimetic nature of tragedy: tragedy depicts characters and situations which are not real, and so can explore contemporary issues in a detached way. Tragedy's engagement with choral lyric is a further example of this phenomenon. Thus the tragic chorus is mimetic not only in the sense that it pretends to be a different group of people, but also in its choral identity. For the tragic chorus is not simply a group of young Athenian males purporting to be a group of young Spartan females, but is also a *chorus* evoking other forms of choral performance. Hence as the chorus responds to situations within the world of the play, it can allude to the roles that real-life choruses play in response to similar situations. The chorus can take on new choral identities as the play progresses, and so an allusion to a lyric genre can also be an allusion to an appropriate choral response to the situation. The chorus is implicated in the world of the play, yet it can also draw on the cultural heritage which it shares with the audience. In doing so the chorus bridges the two worlds, just as it does when it makes use of a traditional *gnōmē* or draws on a familiar mythological *exemplum*.

Tragedy's use of lyric material, then, is often connected with a didactic purpose. Yet any didactic message is left unexpressed; the pervasiveness of poetry in Greek society, and poetry's role in encapsulating social *mores*, mean that simply referring to the genre is enough to evoke its normative associations: they can be communicated without needing to be explicitly stated. Because lyric genres

form part of the audience's cultural heritage and relate to the rituals of their society, the assumptions inherent in them are ones which a Greek would readily respond to. A reference to a genre is also a reference to a way in which a Greek *polis* educates its citizens in the values of the community, and a way in which the shared bonds of society are affirmed.

We should therefore understand generic interaction as a kind of 'metachorality': a technique which draws our attention to the fact that the tragic chorus still represents a chorus (as opposed to a group of Spartan women), and does so by alluding to choral song in other contexts and the social roles that it can play. The prevalence of tragic metachorality stands in stark contrast to the relative lack of meta-theatricality, and we should perhaps see generic interaction as standing in its stead. Like metatheatricality, generic interaction reminds the audience that what they are seeing is a poetic world, governed by its own set of conventions, and separated from their own world. The lyric genre evoked is a different poetic form, yet it also represents the ritual normality of the real world. By superimposing this onto a tragic landscape, and by seeing how lyric and tragic values stand in contrast, the audience is reminded of the distance between tragic and non-tragic worlds. The fact that tragedy chooses to achieve this through the chorus and the tradition of choral song should remind us once more of the central importance that *choreia* held in Greek life. It also shows us tragedy positioning itself as a choral genre: a genre elucidated through other choral forms.

We have long recognized the importance the Greeks placed on choral performance as a form of social and cultural training, and known of the didactic status that poetry carried. Looking at tragedy as part of a wider poetic culture enables us to see it engaged in a dialogue about the role that such poetic norms should have. Tragedy acts as a medium for exploring social norms, and experimenting with the consequences of breaking them. The normative status of lyric poetry makes it the ideal filter through which this discussion can be held. Inherent in the identity of the tragic chorus is a set of other, hidden, choruses. Recognizing their presence is the first step in recognizing how rich an interface exists between tragedy and the poetic culture that produced it.

Appendix

References to genres and related imagery in tragedy

The main part of the book has attempted to outline my approach to interpreting generic interaction where it occurs in particular plays; the purpose of this appendix is to give the reader an overview of how generic interaction operates across tragedy. It includes all the references to choral lyric and its related imagery which I have to date found in my reading of tragedy, organized by genre.

As we have seen, identifying lyric allusions is a delicate task, and one which relies largely on accumulating evidence rather than on clear-cut instances. This makes the work of putting together the appendix challenging. On the one hand, it would be absurd simply to list under *epinikion* every example of athletic imagery in tragedy, or under *paian* every instance of light imagery. Yet as we have seen, lyric allusions can give additional resonance to language which taken alone would not be meaningful; so by only listing watertight examples, it would be easy to miss the scope and complexity of generic interaction. Setting out this information in table form inevitably means that there is limited opportunity to justify the inclusion of particular passages. While I try to briefly explain the identifying features in each passage I cite, individual readers may find that, for certain cases, they need to be convinced by a more detailed argument. Although providing such an argument for every instance is outside the scope of this book, the earlier chapters illustrate the methodology I would use, and I hope to elucidate the more challenging of these instances in further articles. On the whole, I have erred on the side of generosity: those who do not agree with my assessment that a line evokes the style or imagery of a particular genre can choose to disregard it, but if a reference is wrongly not included it becomes harder to get a full picture of generic interaction.

In practice, the references tend to fall into two types:

1. References which taken on their own merits clearly evoke a lyric genre (for example, a *paian*-tag, or explicit reference to the singing of *hymenaios*). These references often appear in plays where the genre is not pervasive or important, and in these cases they tend to be fairly shallow.

Nevertheless, we sometimes find direct references of this kind in conjunction with other types of allusions.

2. Examples where a genre may be evoked, not necessarily because of a watertight identifying feature, but because of the clustering of related language and imagery.

The second type may consist of a single passage or ode, or may pervade the play more widely. In the latter cases, I have included examples of imagery which might be relevant, even where taken in isolation the link to the genre would not be strong. For example, in the *paian* table, while I have not included all instances of light imagery in tragedy, I have included many instances of light imagery in plays where I believe paeanic allusions to be operating more generally, since it is plausible that in these plays they are not simply light imagery but also feed into and enrich the interaction. Similarly, for *thrēnos* I have not included all references to lamentation in tragedy, but have listed instances where the lamentation places particular emphasis on ritual forms of mourning, or on the conventions of lament.

Some genres present particular difficulties. For example, the boundary between *partheneia* and *hymenaios* is a porous one, and many of the motifs and types of imagery are common to both genres, and to issues surrounding sexuality in general. I have limited the *hymenaios* table to examples where this imagery is specifically connected with marriage, while I have included in the *partheneia* table imagery which deals with parthenaic ritual or female transition in more general terms. Because generic interaction often relies on a clustering of evidence I have limited this table to the plays which survive in their entirety: while it may be possible to see references of type 1 in the fragments, type 2 will be harder to identify.

While I hope that this appendix will prove a useful tool, a printed table is inevitably limited in how it can display information. I have recently obtained funding from the University of Oxford's John Fell Fund to design a database to store this information online, and in a format which will allow the user to design his own searches and statistical analyses of generic interaction. At the time of writing this project is in its infancy, but the online database should appear on the Oxford Classics website at <<http://lyricalallusions.Classics.ox.ac.uk>> around the time that this book appears in print.

Table 1. Tragic evocations of the *paian* and related imagery

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Aesch. <i>Ag.</i>	146–50	Chalchas calls on Apollo to protect the Greeks from Artemis' anger	Address to Apollo as Paian Ritual language Relevant function (apotropaic/protection)
	246–7	Iphigeneia sings the <i>paian</i> at her father's parties	Use of genre-term
	508–13	Rejoicing at having returned home, the Herald asks Apollo to be paeanic Apollo instead of the Apollo who fought against them at Troy	Use of word derived from genre-term Relevant deity (Apollo) invoked in his capacity as paeanic god Ritual language Light imagery Relevant function (apotropaic/protective) Contrast between dramatic and paeanic world-view
	638–45	Messenger expresses reluctance to tell of Menelaus' disappearance	Use of genre-term <i>Paian</i> used ironically in context of mourning
	1072–9	Chorus express surprise that Cassandra invokes Apollo in inauspicious circumstances	Ritual language Paian contrasted with mourning Contrast between Apollo's paeanic function and his dramatic role (the giver of Cassandra's prophetic power)
	1247–8	Chorus tell Cassandra not to speak inauspiciously, while Cassandra maintains that religious piety is not appropriate	Use of genre-term Ritual/euphemistic language <i>Paian</i> contrasted with mourning
Aesch. <i>Cho.</i>	149–52	End of Electra's prayer for vengeance	Use of genre-term <i>Paian</i> used ironically in context of mourning Relevant function: prayer for victory and celebration
	342–4	Chorus imagine the restoration of Orestes and Electra	Use of genre-term <i>Paian</i> contrasted with mourning

(continued)

Table 1. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Aesch. <i>Eum.</i>	60–3	Pythia prays for Apollo's protection against the Furies	Ritual language Relevant function (apotropaic/protective)
Aesch. <i>Seven</i>	268–70	Eteocles tells the Chorus to sing a more auspicious song	Use of genre-term (as well as female equivalent <i>ololugmos</i>) Relevant function (apotropaic/protective)
	633–5	Messenger describes Polynices at the gate	Use of genre-term Relevant function (victory/celebration)
	859–60	Chorus announce the deaths of Eteocles and Polynices, and describe their arrival in the land of the dead	Ritual language (ship of mourning inverts the Apolline and paeanic ship to Delos) Light imagery <i>Paian</i> used ironically in context of mourning
	867–70	Antigone and Ismene lament their brothers	Use of genre-term <i>Paian</i> used ironically in context of mourning
Soph. <i>Aj.</i>	693–718	Chorus sing jubilantly about Ajax's change of heart	Repetition of <i>io Pan</i> evokes the <i>paian</i> -cry Invocation of Apollo as protector Ritual/euphemic language Mention of choral dance Light imagery Function of healing: Ajax forgets pain
Soph. <i>Ant.</i>	100–54	Choral <i>parodos</i> celebrating victory	Relevant function (celebration of victory) Mention of choral dance Light imagery Specific intertext (Pind. <i>Pa.</i> 9)
Soph. <i>OT</i>	4–5	Oedipus describes situation in Thebes	Use of genre-term <i>Paian</i> ironically juxtaposed with mourning song Relevant function (healing/apotropaic)
	80–1	Oedipus hopes Creon will bring good news	Address to relevant deity (Apollo)

			Light imagery Relevant function (healing)
	149–50	Priest prays for Apollo to save the city	Ritual language Relevant function (healing)
	151–215	Choral <i>parodos</i> : Chorus pray for the gods to save Thebes	Use of genre-term Ritual language Light imagery Relevant function (healing/apotropaic) Contrast between paeanic and dramatic world-view (healing process will be troubling, not joyous)
	1096–7	Chorus are excited about discovering Oedipus' identity	Address to relevant deity (Apollo) Ritual and paeanic language Phrasing resembles <i>paian</i> -tag
Soph. <i>Phil.</i>	828–32	Chorus sing a <i>paian</i> to Sleep over Philoctetes	<i>Paian</i> -tag Ritual language Light imagery Relevant function (healing)
	1333	Neoptolemus tells Philoctetes he will be healed at Troy by the sons of Asclepius	Mention of relevant cult-figure (Asclepius) Relevant function (healing)
	1345	Neoptolemus tries to persuade Philoctetes to come to Troy	Use of word derived from genre-term Relevant function (healing)
	1427–8	Heracles announces Philoctetes' future at Troy	Mention of relevant cult-figure (Asclepius) Relevant function (healing)
Soph. <i>Trach.</i>	207–15	Chorus prepare to welcome Heracles	Use of genre-term Relevant deities (Apollo and Artemis) Relevant function (celebration of a victory)
	221	Chorus prepare to welcome Heracles	<i>Paian</i> -tag

(continued)

Table 1. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Eur. <i>Alc.</i>	1208	Heracles asks Hyllus to heal him by putting him on the pyre	Use of word derived from genre-term Relevant function (healing)
	18	Apollo describes Alcestis' fate	Light imagery Apollo himself present
	22–3	Apollo contrasts himself with Death	<i>Paian</i> contrasted with mourning
	135	Chorus lament the inevitability of Alcestis' fate	Language of healing
	82	Chorus wonder whether Alcestis has died	Light imagery
	91–2	Chorus wonder whether Alcestis has died	<i>Paian</i> -tag and address to Apollo as <i>Paian</i> Relevant function (apotropaic/healing)
	122–9	Chorus lament Alcestis' impending death and wish there was a way of saving her, remembering Asclepius	Mention of relevant cult-figure (Asclepius) Light imagery Telling of relevant story
	205–8	Maid describes Alcestis' condition	Light imagery
	220–5	Chorus wish for a way to protect Alcestis	Address to <i>Paian</i> <i>Paian</i> contrasted with mourning Relevant function (apotropaic/healing)
	244–7	Alcestis on her deathbed	Light imagery
	269–72	Alcestis on her deathbed	Light imagery
	283	Alcestis speaks to Admetus about arrangements	Light imagery
	362	Admetus laments Alcestis' impending death	Light imagery
	395	Alcestis' son laments his mother's death	Light imagery

	423–4	Admetus laments Alcestis' death and asks the Chorus to sing a song in her honour	Use of genre-term <i>Paian</i> used ironically in context of mourning
	437	Chorus imagine Alcestis in Hades	Light imagery
	667	Admetus rejects Pheres	Light imagery
	691	Pheres says he too enjoys life	Light imagery
	722	Pheres says he too enjoys life	Light imagery
	852	Heracles announces his intention to rescue Alcestis	Light imagery
	868–9	Admetus wishes he too were dead	Light imagery
	969–72	Chorus affirm the power of Necessity, and recall the story of Apollo and the Asclepiades to explain it	Mention of relevant deity and cult-figure Context relevant to healing/protection
	1072–6	Heracles tells Admetus he wishes he could have brought Alcestis back, while Admetus reminds him that it is not possible	Light imagery
Eur. <i>Andr.</i>	900	Orestes is shocked by Hermione's state	Address to Apollo as Healer Relevant function (healing and salvation)
Eur. <i>Hec.</i>	1066–8	Polymestor laments his blindness and wishes it could be cured	Relevant function (healing) Light imagery
Eur. <i>Hel.</i>	175–8	Helen laments her fate	Use of genre-term Ironic function (<i>paian</i> to death) Ironic deity invoked (<i>paian</i> to Persephone not Apollo)
Eur. <i>Her.</i>	687–95	Chorus praise Heracles	Use of genre-term Mention of relevant deity and cult Mention of choral song

(continued)

Table 1. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Eur. <i>Hipp.</i>	820–1	Chorus are fearful when Lyssa appears	Function of celebration and protection Invocation of Paian Function of protection
	1373	Hippolytus prays for death to come	Use of genre-term <i>Paian</i> used ironically in context of death Relevant function (healing)
Eur. <i>IA</i>	1466–74	Iphigeneia tells the Chorus to sing a <i>paian</i> on her account	Use of genre-term Relevant deity (Artemis) Ritual language and details Relevant context: Iph. will be both a source of salvation and of victory
Eur. <i>Ion</i>	82–183	Ion's opening monody	<i>Paian</i> -tag Relevant deity and cult context Ritual language and details Light imagery
	881–922	Creousa's monody	Use of genre-term Relevant deity and cults Inversion of ritual language Light imagery Ironic function (<i>paian</i> used to condemn not praise)
Eur. <i>IT</i>	1439–49	Creousa and Ion are reunited	Light imagery Contrast with death Celebratory function
	1465–7	Creousa and Ion are reunited	Light imagery Celebratory function
	1516–17	Ion rejoices in finding his mother	Light imagery Celebratory function
	184–5	Chorus lament Iphigeneia's misfortune	Use of genre-term Contrast with death
	1403–4	Messenger describes the sailors singing <i>paianes</i> as they set off	Use of genre-term Relevant deity Function of protection

Eur. <i>Tro.</i>	126	Hecuba imagines the Greek ships setting out for Troy	Use of genre-term Ironic function: <i>paian</i> is hateful rather than joyous
	578	Hecuba speaks to Andromache	Use of genre-term Ironic function (<i>paian</i> of sorrow)
[Eur.] <i>Rh.</i>	224–32	Chorus pray to Apollo for his aid	Relevant deity Ritual language (cult details) Apollo invoked as <i>sōtērios</i> Relevant function (warding off danger)

Table 2. Tragic evocation of *epinikion* or athletic imagery used in a relevant context

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Aesch. <i>Ag.</i>	62–6	Chorus describe the toils of the Trojan war, inflicted by Zeus	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	174–5	Chorus affirm the strength of Zeus	Use of genre-term
	343–4	To ensure its safe return Clytemnestra prays the army has not committed plunder	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	1206	Cassandra describes Apollo's lust for her	Athletic imagery
Aesch. <i>Cho.</i>	794–9	Chorus pray Orestes' murder attempt will succeed	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	1022–3	Orestes describes the onset of madness	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
Aesch. <i>Eum.</i>	155–9	Furies wake up to find Orestes gone	Athletic imagery
	375–6	Furies describe themselves as tripping up swift runners	Athletic imagery

(continued)

Table 2. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
	589	Furies describe Orestes' admission that he killed his mother as the first of three wrestling throws	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
Soph. <i>Ant.</i>	1064–5	Tiresias prophesies Creon's fate	Athletic imagery
Soph. <i>El.</i>	25–7	Orestes speaks to his old servant	Athletic imagery
	48–50	The chariot story is contrived	Athletic imagery
	504–15	Chorus remember Pelops' chariot race	Athletic imagery Implication that the current (non-athletic) struggle is linked to this athletic one
	681–760	The story of Orestes' chariot race	Description and praise of athletic victory Epinician language and imagery Gnomic moralizing derived from the event described
	1082–97	Chorus praise Electra and wish for her success	Discussion of <i>aretē</i> Function of praise Athletic imagery (winning of prizes) Importance of fame and reputation
Soph. <i>Phil.</i>	431	Neoptolemus speaks of Odysseus' cunning	Athletic imagery
Soph. <i>Trach.</i>	20–1	Deianeira tells the story of her rescue by Heracles	Heracles as athletic figure (relevant throughout this play) Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	26	Deianeira explains that Zeus <i>agōnios</i> decided the outcome of the battle	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	36	Deianeira tells how Heracles finished his labours and moved to Trachis	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one

Eur. <i>Alc.</i>	185–6	Messenger reports Heracles' success	Athletic imagery Victory incurring envy
	441–2	Deianeira describes the futility of resisting <i>eros</i> , depicted as a boxer	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one (NB: also a typical image from erotic poetry)
	488–9	Lichas describes Heracles' weakness before <i>eros</i>	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	497–530	Chorus describe the contest for Deianeira's hand	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one Praise song to commemorate victory Focus on local communities of contestants Ornate language to describe struggle Function of praise Theme of successful <i>nostos</i> Victory gained while away Role of community in responding to victory
	633–62	Chorus imagine Heracles' return	Athletic imagery
	857	Chorus lament Iole's arrival in Trachis, calling her 'swift'	Athletic imagery
	435–76	Chorus praise Alcestis	Praise song Praise of noble deeds Role of poet in ensuring reputation
	648	Admetus criticizes Pheres for refusing to die for him	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	843–9	Heracles announces his intention to wrestle with Death to retrieve Alcestis	Heracles as athletic figure (relevant throughout this play) Athletic imagery
	1026–36	Heracles' fake story about winning a woman in an athletic competition	Athletic imagery, and athletic contest imagined to explain away the situation Calculation of various goods (profit and glory)

(continued)

Table 2. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Eur. <i>Andr.</i>	1141–2	Heracles' battle with Death	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	1153	Admetus wishes Heracles well on his 'homeward run'	Athletic imagery
	766–801	Chorus praise Peleus' bravery	Dactylo-epitrite metre Function of praise Mention of previous victories Wealth vs. birth vs. <i>aretē</i> Epinician <i>gnōmai</i> Mention of victor's genealogy Importance of future reputation
Eur. <i>Bacch.</i>	1019–21	Chorus describe Trojan war	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	975–6	Dionysus anticipates Pentheus' death and describes it as a contest in which he will be victorious	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	1161	Chorus respond to the news of Pentheus' death	Use of <i>kallinikos</i> Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
Eur. <i>El.</i>	527–9	Electra criticizes the old man's assumption that Orestes has returned	Athletic imagery
	614	Orestes and the old man discuss how he can carry out his plan	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	623	The old man tells Orestes that Aegisthus can be found in the horse-pastures	Aristocratic imagery (with athletic connotations)
	686–7	Electra sends Orestes off and tells him their fates are linked	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one

	694–5	Electra asks the Chorus to tell her what happens	Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	761–2	Messenger announces Orestes' victory	Use of <i>kallinikos</i> Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	781–2	Orestes tells Aegisthus that he and Pylades are on their way to the Olympic Games	Athletic connotations and allusion to Games
	824–6	Orestes helps Aegisthus make a sacrifice	Athletic imagery
	861–5	Chorus rejoice on learning of Orestes' victory	Use of <i>kallinikos</i> Direct allusion to Olympic Games Function of praising great deeds Mention of praise-song
	866	Electra addresses the sun's chariot	Athletic imagery
	870–2	Electra rejoices in Orestes' victory	Athletic imagery (crowning victor) Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	880–9	Electra praises Orestes and Pylades	Use of <i>kallinikos</i> Athletic imagery (inc. crowning victor) Mention of victor's genealogy Function of praise
	953–6	Electra upbraids the dead Aegisthus	Athletic imagery
	987	Orestes prepares to kill Clytemnestra	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	1274–6	Castor tells Orestes he must found a city by the river Alpheus	Allusion to Olympic Games Periphrastic naming of site by the river
Eur. <i>Her.</i>	49	Amphitryon describes taking refuge at the altar set up by Heracles	Use of <i>kallinikos</i>
	119–23	Choral <i>parodos</i>	Athletic imagery Praise of youthful vigour

(continued)

Table 2. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
	348–441	Chorus praise Heracles' labours	Function of praise Role of poetry in guaranteeing reputation Importance of noble action
	580–2	Heracles promises to defend his family	Epinician style Prioritization among good things Use of <i>kallinikos</i>
	637–700	Chorus praise youth	Prioritization among good things Praise of youthful vigour How to tell <i>aretē</i> Role of poetry in guaranteeing reputation
	763–814	Chorus praise Heracles' victory	Function of praise Importance of community to praise Mention of choral song Athletic imagery Moralizing <i>gnōmai</i>
	839	Iris urges Lyssa on	Athletic imagery Garlands
	863	Lyssa agrees to attack Heracles	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as athletic
	867	Lyssa describes the onset of madness	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as athletic
	880–2	Chorus describe Lyssa as a charioteer	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as athletic
	947–9	Heracles imagines himself as a charioteer	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as athletic
	957–62	Heracles imagines himself participating in the Isthmian Games	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as athletic
	1229	Heracles describes the children's death as an <i>agōn</i>	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as athletic
	1334–5	Theseus describes the honour Athens will gain from sheltering Heracles	Garlands Importance of reputation Importance of the community to the victory

	1425–6	Heracles prioritizes friendship over wealth or strength	Prioritization of good things Nature of <i>aretē</i>
Eur. <i>Hipp.</i>	815	Chorus describe Phaedra's suicide as a wrestling throw	Athletic imagery
Eur. <i>IA</i>	206–30	Chorus describe Achilles racing his chariot in armour	Athletic imagery
Eur. <i>Med.</i>	410–30	Chorus praise women and criticize men	Dactylo-epitrite metre Function of praise Opening with striking imagery Role of poet in ensuring reputation
	765	Medea exults after being granted sanctuary by Aegeus	Use of <i>kallinikos</i> Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one
	1181–2	Messenger describes the princess's death	Athletic imagery
	1245	Medea prepares to kill the children	Athletic imagery Non-athletic struggle construed as an athletic one

Table 3. Tragic evocation of *partheneia* or female transition ritual

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Aesch. <i>Ag.</i>	239–41	Chorus describe Iphigeneia's sacrifice	Reference to ritual details of <i>rite de passage</i> Shedding of <i>krókōtos</i> evokes Athenian <i>arkteia</i> Erotic imagery
	1389–92	Clytemnestra describes Agamemnon's death	Erotic imagery <i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery with sexual overtones Ironic contrast between fertility and death
Aesch. <i>Suppl.</i>	72–3	Chorus lament their fate	Erotic imagery Assimilation of natural and human fertility Sexual intercourse likened to plucking flowers
	556–61	Chorus tell story of Io	Erotic imagery

(continued)

Table 3. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Soph. <i>Trach.</i>	996–1005	Danaus urges his daughters to guard their virginity	<i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery with sexual overtones Erotic imagery <i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery with sexual overtones
	144–50	Deianeira contrasts the pleasures of youth with the troubles of adulthood	Assimilation of natural and human fertility <i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery with sexual overtones
	549	Deianeira fears for her marriage	Assimilation of natural and human fertility
Eur. <i>Bacch.</i>	402–16	Chorus wish to escape to Cyprus	<i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery with sexual overtones
	694–700	Messenger describes the Bacchantes in the mountains	Female sexuality assimilated to wilderness Mixing up of generations suggests undermining and reversal of usual transition pattern
	864–75	Chorus compare themselves to fawns	Young women like wild animals <i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery
Eur. <i>El.</i>	1056	Bacchantes like fillies loosed from the yoke	Young women like animals Yoking used of female transition to marriageability Reversal of normal transition pattern
	167–212	Chorus try to persuade Electra to join in the festival for Hera	Reference to female transitional ritual Description of parthenaïc choral dancing Relevant deity evoked Focus on female finery and hair One girl singled out as conspicuous among the peer-group (though here as conspicuously below rather than above the others)
	304–13	Electra mourns her situation	Mention of female choral dancing in a ritual context

			Focus on female finery Mention of suitors courting young women
Eur. <i>Hcl.</i>	781–3	Chorus describe the religious festivals in Athens	Description of all-night female dancing
Eur. <i>Hec.</i>	351–5	Polyxena describes how she was raised as royalty	One girl singled out as conspicuous among the peer-group, with a view to future marriage
	455–74	Chorus imagine themselves participating in female activities in Greece	Details of female transition ritual Mention of choral song performed by <i>parthenoi</i>
	923–42	Chorus describe being taken to the Greek ships	Rape construed as a form of marriage Self-description as a <i>parthenos</i> Focus on feminine accessories Female fear of marriage Artemis invoked to protect the women
Eur. <i>Hel.</i>	1–3	Helen describes the streams of the Nile	Sacred spring <i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery Focus on virginity
	10–13	Story of Theonoe	Female transition (failed <i>parthenos</i> figure)
	164–78	Helen laments her situation	Persephone myth Failed <i>parthenoi</i> (Sirens)
	185–90	Chorus respond to Helen's cry	Helen as a bride Rape (alternative form of transition)
	241–8	Helen describes her abduction by Hermes	Flower-picking Abduction of young girl (alternative form of transition)
	375–85	Helen wishes to be like the girls transformed into animals	Relevant deity (Hera) Fear of marriage Wildness of <i>parthenos</i> Alternative form of transition (becoming animals) Evocation of <i>rites de passage</i> (separation in wilderness)
	543–4	Helen runs to the tomb	Comparison of girl to horse Wildness of <i>parthenos</i>

(continued)

Table 3. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Eur. <i>Hipp.</i>	798–9	Helen explains her situation to Menelaus	Evocation of <i>rites de passage</i> (separation in wilderness)
	1301–68	Chorus sing of Demeter's search for Persephone	Fear of marriage Relevant deity and invocation of Persephone myth Persephone participating in parthenaic chorus Abduction of young girl <i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery
	1465–94	Chorus imagine Helen's return to Greece	Evocation of female parthenaic song Relevant deities and cult details
	742–51	Chorus wish they could be at the site of the <i>Hieros Gamos</i> : the garden of the Hesperides	<i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery in an erotic setting, associated with marriage and healthy sexuality
	1423–30	Artemis describes Hippolytus' future cult	Female transition ritual Mention of female song Mourning associated with transition/marriage
Eur. <i>IA</i>	791–3	Trojan women imagine their future rape	Rape construed as a form of marriage Focus on female beauty (hair) Sexual intercourse likened to plucking flowers
Eur. <i>IT</i>	20–4	Iphigeneia reports the reason for her sacrifice	Assimilation of female and natural fertility Failed transition
	130–1	Choral <i>parodos</i>	Focus on virginity Relevant deity (Artemis)
	221–4	Iphigeneia laments her situation	References to contemporary female transition ritual
	392–6	Chorus imagine the journey of Io	Relevant mythological paradigm of female transition
	439–46	Chorus imagine Helen's death	Erotic imagery <i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery with sexual overtones Ironic contrast between fertility and death

	1089–1105	Chorus compare themselves to halcyons	Evocation of relevant cult (Artemis Lochia) <i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery Possible relevance of halcyon
	1138–52	Chorus wish to dance again	Reference to female choral dance Focus on female finery Positive model for female transition
	1462–5	Athene prophesies Iphigeneia's future at Brauron	Relevant cult aetiology
Eur. <i>Phoen.</i>	202–25	Chorus tell their story	Assimilation of female and natural fertility Focus on female beauty Chorus involved in alternative form of transition
	642–54	Chorus describe the foundation of Thebes	<i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery
	1265–9	Jocasta contrasts ordinary feminine pursuits with what Antigone must do	Reference to female choral dance Antigone to undergo an alternative form of transition to maturity
	1485–92	Antigone describes her new attitude	Reference to female beauty and finery Antigone's experience is an alternative form of transition
	1675	Antigone threatens to kill Haemon	Females reject normal modes of transition and instead become dangerous
Eur. <i>Tro.</i>	551–5	Chorus describe their dancing just before Troy was taken	Female choral dance Relevant deity (Artemis) Rape as alternative form of transition

Table 4. Tragic evocation of *hymenaios* and imagery of wedding ritual

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Aesch. <i>Ag.</i>	699–716	Chorus describe marriage of Paris and Helen	Use of genre-term Mention of ritual activities 'Marriage-to-death' motif
	1156–9	Cassandra laments marriage of Paris and her own imminent death	Mention of ritual activities 'Marriage-to-death' motif Inversion of <i>makarismos</i>
Aesch. <i>Suppl.</i>	644–5	Chorus rejoice to learn Argos will take them in and exalt in their victory over the men	Contrasting male vs. female viewpoints regarding marriage
	804–7	Chorus fear they will be taken away by the Egyptians	'Marriage-to-death' motif Poignancy of wedding Female fear/rejection of marriage
	836–910	Chorus's interchange with Herald	'Marriage-to-death' motif Female fear/rejection of marriage Contrasting male vs. female viewpoints regarding marriage Rape/violence constructed as marriage
	1018–73	Amoebean song between Chorus and bodyguards	Mixed-sex choral singing Contrasting male vs. female viewpoints regarding marriage Female fear/rejection of marriage
[Aesch.] <i>PV</i>	552–60	Chorus contrast Prometheus' wedding day with his current situation	Use of genre-term Mention of ritual activities Marriage contrasted with suffering
Soph. <i>Ant.</i>	813–16	Antigone laments her fate	Use of genre-term to indicate marriage more generally 'Marriage-to-death' motif
	876–8	Antigone laments her fate	Use of genre-term
	891	Antigone laments her fate	'Marriage-to-death' motif 'Marriage-to-death' motif
	916–18	Antigone laments her fate	Use of genre-term 'Marriage-to-death' motif
	1236–43	Description of Haemon's suicide	Erotic imagery 'Marriage-to-death' motif

Soph. <i>OC</i>	1221	Chorus moralize about human life	Use of genre-term Contrast between marriage and death
Soph. <i>Trach.</i>	205–15	Chorus prepare to welcome Heracles back	Situation portrayed as one of marriage Ritual language Choral singing, divided by gender
Eur. <i>Alc.</i>	915–21	Admetus laments Alcestis' death	Use of genre-term Mention of ritual activities Contrast between wedding and mourning song Evocation of <i>makarismos</i>
Eur. <i>Hclid.</i>	579–80, 591–3	The Maiden chooses death instead of marriage	'Marriage-to-death' motif
	917–18	Chorus describe Heracles' marriage to Hebe	<i>Hymenaios</i> -tag
Eur. <i>Hec.</i>	416	Polyxena laments her death	'Marriage-to-death' motif
	523–4	Description of Polyxena's sacrifice	Reference to marriage-ritual (<i>XEK</i> gesture) 'Marriage-to-death' motif
	609–18	Hecuba prepares Polyxena's body for burial	'Marriage-to-death' motif (and similarity of wedding and funeral ritual)
Eur. <i>Hel.</i>	639–41	Helen recalls her wedding day	Evocation of <i>makarismos</i> Mention of wedding ritual
	722–4	The servant recalls Helen's wedding	Use of genre-term Mention of wedding ritual
	1433–5	Theoclymenus imagines his wedding	Use of genre-term Evocation of <i>makarismos</i>
Eur. <i>Her.</i>	10	Amphitryon recalls Heracles' marriage to Megara	Use of genre-term Contrast between wedding song and current situation
	480–4	Megara prepares the children for death	'Marriage-to-death' motif (and similarity of wedding and funeral ritual)
Eur. <i>Hipp.</i>	545–54	Chorus describe Heracles' marriage to Iole	Use of genre-term to indicate marriage more generally

(continued)

Table 4. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Eur. <i>IA</i>	1104–50	Chorus lament Hippolytus' exile	Inversion of <i>makarismos</i> Use of ritual language (<i>ekdidōmi</i> for giving of bride) Rape construed as a marriage Mixed-sex chorus Mention of rivalry for Hippolytus' bed Mother's role in wedding Departure from old life Evocation of Graces
	123	Agamemnon's letter to Clytemnestra	Context relevant to genre Use of genre-term to indicate marriage more generally
	435–9	Messenger announces Iphigeneia's arrival	Context relevant to genre Use of genre-term Mention of ritual activities (including choral dance)
	460–1	Agamemnon laments Iphigeneia's fate	Evocation of <i>makarismos</i> Context relevant to genre
	628	Clytemnestra imagines Iphigeneia's marriage	'Marriage-to-death' motif Evocation of <i>makarismos</i>
	651	Agamemnon explains why he is crying	Context relevant to genre 'Marriage-to-death' motif
	667	Agamemnon describes Iphigeneia's voyage	Context relevant to genre 'Marriage-to-death' motif
	673–6	Agamemnon describes the sacrifice he must make	'Marriage-to-death' motif
	691–3	Clytemnestra excuses Agamemnon's tears by imagining her own sadness when Iphigeneia is married	Context relevant to genre Use of genre-term to indicate marriage more generally Separation of daughter from mother
	716–41	Clytemnestra and Agamemnon discuss the details of Iphigeneia's marriage	Poignancy of wedding Mention of ritual activities Mother's role in wedding Evocation of <i>makarismos</i> Evocation of relevant deity (Hera)

	905–6	Clytemnestra criticizes Agamemnon	‘Marriage-to-death’ motif
	1036–1197	Chorus describe marriage of Peleus and Thetis and contrast it with Iphigeneia’s fate	Use of genre-term Evocation of mythological marriage to compare with real marriage Mention of ritual activities (including choral dance) Evocation of <i>makarismos</i> ‘Marriage-to-death’ motif Mother’s role in wedding
	1110–14	Agamemnon calls for Iphigeneia to be sent out	‘Marriage-to-death’ motif Ritual details of sacrifice and marriage
	1397–8	Iphigeneia says the sack of Troy will take the place of a marriage for her	‘Marriage-to-death’ motif
Eur. <i>Ion</i>	1474–5	Creousa explains Ion’s birth	Use of genre-term Mention of wedding ritual
Eur. <i>IT</i>	208–16	Iphigeneia laments her situation	‘Marriage-to-death’ motif
	358–68	Iphigeneia recalls her sacrifice	‘Marriage-to-death’ motif
	818–19	Iphigeneia remembers her marital bath in Aulis	‘Marriage-to-death’ motif (and similarity of wedding and funeral ritual)
	856–61	Iphigeneia recalls her sacrifice	‘Marriage-to-death’ motif
Eur. <i>Med.</i>	824–45	Chorus praise Athens	<i>Locus amoenus</i> imagery Evocation of Aphrodite as a socializing force Evocation of <i>makarismos</i>
	990–1001	Chorus laments Jason’s and Medea’s fate and the unfortunate nature of his new marriage	Marriage context and language Inversion of <i>makarismos</i> (explaining why the bridegroom and the bride are unhappy and unlucky)
	1025–7	Medea laments the children’s imminent death	Contrast between marriage and death Mother’s role in wedding
Eur. <i>Or.</i>	1209–10	Pylades imagines his marriage to Electra	Use of genre-term Mention of wedding ritual
Eur. <i>Phoen.</i>	337–49	Jocasta laments Polynices’ marriage	Inversion of wedding ritual

(continued)

Table 4. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
	944–8	Tiresias explains why Menoeceus must die	Perverted <i>makarismos</i> Mother's role in wedding 'Marriage-to-death' motif
Eur. <i>Suppl.</i>	990–1030	Evadne prepares to cast herself onto the pyre	Mention of wedding song 'Marriage-to-death' motif Mention of wedding ritual
Eur. <i>Tro.</i>	201–5	Chorus imagine their enslavement	Fear of leaving parents' house Sacred spring as part of wedding ritual
	308–41	Cassandra's monody	Hymen cry Ritual details of wedding Reference to hymenaeal song
	344–52	Hecuba pities Cassandra's fate	Rape as marriage
	445	Cassandra prophesies her fate	Ritual details of wedding 'Marriage-to-death' motif
	568–9	Andromache enters on a wagon	Ritual details of wedding
	778–80	Andromache leaves for the ships	Reference to <i>hymenaios</i> Rape construed as marriage Ironic inversion (marriage as cause of child-killing rather than child-rearing)

Table 5. Tragic evocation of *thrēnos*, funerary song, and ritual lament

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Aesch. <i>Ag.</i>	990–4	The Chorus express anxiety about Agamemnon's homecoming	Mourning song in opposition to the Muses Mourning song as a metaphor for general anxiety (and foreshadowing the real mourning at the end of the play)

	1322–30	Cassandra wishes to give her own <i>thrēnos</i> , and moralizes about the fragility of human life	Perversion of mourning ritual: the deceased rather than the mourners gives the <i>thrēnos</i> Death as a source of generalizable morals
	1541–50	Chorus imagine Agamemnon's burial	Funerary ritual evoked to be undermined: next of kin is also the murderer Praise-song addressed to the dead as a tomb-side ritual
	1553–4	Clytemnestra says that she will bury Agamemnon	Rejection of external mourning (as per contemporary custom) but rather than socially normal it expresses the distortion of familial relationships
Aesch. <i>Cho.</i>	22–31	Chorus describe themselves as engaged in female ritual mourning	Conventions of mourning
	87–99	Electra asks how to make the ritual libations	Funerary ritual used to bring out the distorted situation in the house
	332–44	Electra calls upon Agamemnon; Chorus hope for their restoration	Antiphonal song Conventions of private lament (the mourner bewails their own situation) Song as a form of mourning
	423–8	Chorus recalls their mourning for Agamemnon	Conventions of mourning Lament as an Asian custom
	926	Clytemnestra describes herself as singing her own <i>thrēnos</i>	Perversion of mourning practice: deceased sings their own lament Clytemnestra's previous advice and morals imagined as threnodic moralizing on the human condition
Aesch. <i>Pers.</i>	120–39	Persians imagine the mourning if bad news comes	Mourning as a female activity

(continued)

Table 5. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
	532–83	The Chorus grieve for the Persian dead	Pathos of unfulfilled hopes of the deceased's female relatives Mourning as a female activity Pathos of the mourners left behind
	839–42	Darius moralizes on the fragility of human fortune	Death as a source of generalizable morals <i>Khaire</i> as an address to the dead
	909–1077	Xerxes and the Chorus lament together	Antiphonal song Conventions of ritual lament (beating breast, self-mutilation, etc.) Inversion of gender-roles Naming and remembering of dead Mourning as an Oriental activity Perversion of funerary ritual (bodies not present to mourn)
Aesch. <i>Seven</i>	875–1004	The Chorus (possibly also joined by Antigone and Ismene) lament the deaths of Eteocles and Polynices	Antiphonal song Ritualistic phrasing Inversion of custom: dead criticized for the destruction they brought on their family rather than praised
Aesch. <i>Suppl.</i>	112–21	The Chorus lament their situation and liken it to death	Details of female ritual lament Funerary ritual used to characterize and express their feelings about the situation Inversion of usual practice: lament sung while alive
Soph. <i>Aj.</i>	850–3	Ajax imagines his mother's grief but asserts that there is nothing to be gained by lament	Reference to ritual funerary activities Mourning practices used to play on gender differences

Soph. <i>Ant.</i>			Ethos of self-restraint Mourning practices used to reflect on the tragic world (hero figure vs. ordinary people)
	859–65	Ajax bids farewell to Salamis and Troy	Perversion of mourning practice (deceased speaks his own epitaph)
			Reference to ritual practice (<i>khaire</i> used in funerary context)
	944–5	Tecmessa imagines her slavery	Private ritual lament (effect of bereavement on her own life)
	1003–23	Teucer imagines the hostile reception of his father	Private ritual lament (effect of bereavement on his own life)
			Mourning practices used to play on gender differences (we expect Tecmessa to deliver the lament, but Teucer does instead)
	1037–9	Teucer moralizes about death	Death as a source of generalizable morals
	806–82	Antigone mourns her death with the Chorus	Antiphonal song as a convention of mourning
			Perversion of mourning practices (A. mourns her own death)
			Chorus praise the dead, but in an ironic manner
			Chorus moralize, but to criticize rather than console
	1067–71	Tiresias prophesies Creon's downfall	Perversion of mourning practice (burying living not dead)
	1155–71	Messenger uses Haemon's death to moralize about the fragility of human affairs	Death as a source of generalizable morals
	1246–50	Messenger hopes that Eurydice's exit	Contemporary values: restraint as an

(continued)

Table 5. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
		suggests a restrained attitude	appropriate way of responding to grief Difference between public and private mourning
Soph. <i>El.</i>	86–253	<i>Kommos</i> between Electra and the Chorus	Antiphonal song as a convention of mourning Perversion of mourning practices (Electra unable to limit or give up her grief) Language of traditional <i>consolatio</i> Contrast between traditional and tragic world (Chorus vs. Electra)
	275–81	Electra describes Clytemnestra's perversion of mourning for Agamemnon	Perversion of mourning practices Mention of choral song (but used to celebrate rather than mourn)
	289–92	Electra describes how Clytemnestra criticizes her for mourning	Language of traditional <i>consolatio</i> used in a context which perverts it
	406–10	Chrysothemis explains why Clytemnestra is pouring libations for Agamemnon	Perversion of mourning practices
	1126–70	Electra laments Orestes over his urn	Perversion of mourning practice (body not really present; Electra unable to fulfil her obligations) Focus on memorialization of the dead Conventions of private ritual lament (effect of the bereavement on her own life)
	1171–3	Chorus urge moderation in grief	Traditional <i>consolatio</i>
Soph. <i>OC</i>	1670–1750	Antigone and Ismene lament with the Chorus	Antiphonal song as a convention of mourning

			Private ritual lament: effect of the bereavement on the mourner
			Traditional <i>consolatio</i> from Chorus
	1750–3	Theseus tells the girls to stop their lament	Ethos of self-restraint
	1777–9	Chorus urge the girls to remain self- controlled	Ethos of self-restraint
Eur. <i>Alc.</i>	86–104	Chorus wonder whether Alcestis is dead yet	Mention of funerary ritual Antiphonal song (between two semi- choruses)
	317–25	Alcestis laments that she will not see her daughter's marriage, and praises herself	Inversion of convention: the deceased rather than the mourner laments the loss of her expectations; the deceased offers her own praise
	343–56	Admetus announces what he will do to mourn Alcestis	Ritual conventions of mourning but excessive Statue evokes grave memorials
	416–19	Chorus urge Admetus to show self-restraint	Ethos of self-restraint Traditional <i>consolatio</i> and moralizing
	435–76	Chorus sing a funeral song to honour Alcestis	Praise of the dead as a form of mourning <i>Khaire</i> to address the dead Memorialization of the dead as a function of song
	619–28	Pheres praises Alcestis	Praise of the dead General moralization <i>Khaire</i> to address the dead
	779–86	Heracles moralizes on the nature of human life	Threnodic-style moralizing, though in a sympotic context
	890–932	Admetus laments while the Chorus urge restraint	Antiphonal song Ethos of self-restraint Gnomic moralizing
	995–1005	Chorus imagine Alcestis' grave- monument and the response of passers-by	Situation similar to that envisaged in epigrams Better afterlife for the dead <i>Khaire</i> as a greeting for the dead

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Table 5. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
Eur. <i>Andr.</i>	1173–1225	Peleus and the Chorus lament Neoptolemus' death	Antiphonal song as a convention of mourning (explicitly referred to at 1200) Conventions of private ritual lament (effect of the bereavement on the mourner)
	1270–2	Thetis tells Peleus to stop mourning	Death used as a source of moralizing Ethos of self-restraint
Eur. <i>Bacch.</i>	1308–26	Cadmus mourns Pentheus' death	Conventions of private ritual lament (effect of the bereavement on the mourner, loss of the usual expectations of the mourner) Death as a source of generalizable morals
Eur. <i>El.</i>	143–9	Electra mourns Agamemnon	Rituals of mourning
	323–31	Electra describes Clytemnestra and Aegisthus' violations of Agamemnon's tomb	Song as part of mourning Perversion of mourning ritual
	907–56	Electra criticizes the dead Aegisthus	Inversion of usual tradition: rather than praising the dead and naming his good deeds, E. lists A.'s crimes and faults and attacks him for them (this inversion drawn attention to by E.'s earlier hesitation to make this speech (900–4)) E. draws a general moral from observing A's life, but because of his wickedness rather than his praiseworthiness
	1325–6	Orestes asks Electra to mourn their parting like a death	Rituals of mourning

Eur. <i>Hcl.</i>	608–29	The Chorus comfort Iolaus after the Maiden's death, and moralize on the human condition	Death as a source of generalizable morals Praise of the dead Ethos of self-restraint
Eur. <i>Hec.</i>	585–602, 619–28	Hecuba responds to the report of Polyxena's death	Effect of the death on her own life Praise of the dead as a way of dealing with grief General morals drawn from the death
Eur. <i>Her.</i>	348–58	Chorus praise the supposedly dead Heracles	Praise of the dead as a way of responding to death
	454–89	Megara laments the children's impending death	Conventions of private ritual lament (effects of the death on the bereaved) Perversion of usual mourning ritual: the dead are not yet dead, and the mourner will be one of the deceased
	503–13	Amphitryon accepts his impending death and moralizes on the fragility of human fortune	Death as a source of generalizable morals Perversion of usual ritual: the deceased himself draws the morals
	1025–7	Chorus lament the children	Choral dance as a convention of mourning
Eur. <i>Hipp.</i>	834–5	Chorus remind Theseus that he is not the first to have suffered bereavement	Conventional strategy of <i>consolatio</i> from Chorus Theseus' lyric mourning responded to by a wider group
Eur. <i>IA</i>	1437–44	Iphigeneia tells Clytemnestra not to mourn for her or to set up a memorial	Undermining of normal funerary ritual (to emphasize that I's death should not be considered a death but a joyous event)
Eur. <i>IT</i>	144–9	Iphigeneia mourns Orestes	Suggestion that <i>thrēnos</i> is not in fact a valid form of song (not accompanied by the lyre, not related to the Muses)
	160–74	Iphigeneia pours libations for Orestes	Perversion of usual mourning practices: tomb not available for

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Table 5. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
	179–85	Chorus respond to Iphigeneia's grief	libations to be poured at or hair left at Mention of convention that mourning song is antiphonal Mourning song as a non-Greek custom
	628–35	Iphigeneia tells Orestes how she will bury him	Conventions of ritual practice
	700–6	Orestes asks Pylades to set up a memorial for him in Argos	Importance of memorialization of dead
	819	Iphigeneia describes sending a lock of hair in place of her body	Focus on epitaph Perversion of ritual practice (body not available to be buried; hair-cutting by deceased rather than by mourners)
Eur. <i>Med.</i>	1024–39	Medea laments her failed expectations regarding her children	Conventions of private ritual lament (effect of the bereavement on the mourner's own life), but here inverted as M. is not only the mourner but the killer
Eur. <i>Or.</i>	960–81	Chorus lament Orestes and Electra's impending deaths	Details of ritual lament (beating head, self-mutilation) General moral (fragility of human fortune) derived from the deaths Perversion of usual custom: lament sung before rather than after death
	1381–99	Phrygian laments the fall of Troy and the death of Helen	Lament as an oriental feature Song as a convention of lament
Eur. <i>Phoen.</i>	1509–29	Antigone laments the deaths of her brothers and mother	Song as a convention of lament Details of ritual lament (tearing of hair, wailing)

Eur. <i>Suppl.</i>	49–54	Chorus lament their inability to mourn their sons properly	Gestures of ritual lament (e.g. self-laceration) in a context which undermines it (absence of bodies or memorials)
	70–8	Chorus describe themselves as lamenting in conjunction with another group of mourners	Attention drawn to antiphonal song as a convention of lament Choral song as a funerary activity
	772–7	Adrastus laments the dead	Song as a funerary activity Death as a source of generalizable morals
	794–836	Adrastus and the Chorus lament the dead	Attention drawn to antiphonal song as a convention of lament Relationship of mourner to deceased and effects on their lives
	857–917	Adrastus names and praises the dead	Praise of the dead and their great deeds Generalizable morals drawn from hearing this
	918–24	Chorus lament their own situation as bereaved mothers	Effects of bereavement on the mourners' position
	955–79	Chorus sing about their situation as bereaved mothers	Effects of bereavement on the mourners' position Mourning as a form of song
	1080–1113	Iphis mourns his situation	Effects of bereavement on the mourner Death as a source of generalizable morals
	1123–64	Chorus mourn in antiphony with a chorus of boys	Antiphonal song as a mourning convention Effects of bereavement on the mourner
Eur. <i>Tro.</i>	740–63	Andromache laments Astyanax' fate	Conventions of private ritual lamentation (e.g. articulation of relation between mourner and deceased, effect of the bereavement on her own life)
	1084–5	Chorus describe how their husbands did not receive funeral rites	Perversion of mourning practices

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Table 5. (cont.)

Play	Lines	Context	Identifying features or points of interest
	1167–1205	Hecuba laments Astyanax' death	Pathos for the dead Praise of the dead undermined as A. has not achieved the things for which the dead are conventionally praised Effect of bereavement on the mourner's life Memorialization of dead (H. imagines A.'s epitaph) Death as a source of generalizable morals
	1209–15	Hecuba adorns Astyanax' corpse	Perversion of normal praise of the dead (A. is not praised for the things he normally would be)
	1226–59	Hecuba and the Chorus lament together	Antiphonal song between mourner and wider group
	1240–50	Hecuba moralizes from Astyanax' death	Gnomic wisdom used as a source of consolation But this convention also undermined by Hecuba's claim that funerary ritual makes no difference
[Eur.] <i>Rhes.</i>	895–914	The Muse laments Rhesus' death	Private ritual lament: relationship of singer to bereaved, and effect of bereavement on her life
	948–9	The Muse says she will mourn Rhesus alone	Reversal of threnodic convention: mourning song as a personal rather than formal activity, and as an individual rather than a group one
	976–7	The Muse anticipates the <i>thrēnoi</i> that the Muses will sing at Achilles' death	<i>Thrēnos</i> as a formal and choral genre (and allusion to the <i>thrēnos</i> in Hom. <i>Od.</i> 24.60)

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